THE FORMATION OF SHIRES IN THE WEST MIDLANDS: THE CASE OF STAFFORDSHIRE

by

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ABSTRACT

By the time of Domesday Book the shire was the basic unit of administration throughout the West Midlands and most of England, fulfilling important military, administrative, judicial, and fiscal functions. But we know very little from reliable documentary sources about the origins of the West Midland shires as territories owing to an almost complete absence of them. This study therefore investigates afresh the territorial origins of Staffordshire. It assesses how much can be said about the layout of the shire's hundreds in 1086, and compares the layout of its Domesday hundreds and that of its early parochial landscape. The study also examines what the course of the shire's boundary reveals about its origins, and considers how the roles that Staffordshire served may have influenced its original geographical extent.

A multi-disciplinary approach has been used, employing a wide range of topographical, archaeological and place-name evidence as well as the sparse available written material. The thesis argues that explaining the origins of the West Midland shires is far less straightforward than previous studies have proposed, and shows that many of our sources for the origins and development of the English medieval administrative landscape are more difficult to interpret than is usually believed.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my gran

Kathleen Mary Edwards

1916-2008

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Firstly, I wish to thank my supervisor, Steven Bassett, for the help, advice, support, and encouragement he has given during the course of my PhD. I hope that this thesis will go some way towards repaying the debt that I owe him.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASC: Collaborative: MS. A	J.M. Bately (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume III: MS A* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986)
ASC: Collaborative: MS. B	S. Taylor (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume IV: MS B* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983)
ASC: Collaborative: MS. C	K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume V: MS. C* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001)
ASC: Collaborative: MS. D	G.P. Cubbin (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VI: MS D* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996)
ASC: Collaborative: MS. E	S. Irvine (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VII: MS. E* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004)
ASC: Collaborative: MS. F	P.S. Baker (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VIII: MS F* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001)
BCL	Birmingham Central Library: Archives and Heritage
BCS	W. Birch (ed.), *Cartularium Saxonicum: A Collection of Charters Relating to Anglo-Saxon History* (3 volumes, 1885-1893)
BoF	*Liber Feodorum: The Book of Fees Part II: AD 1242-1293* (London: HMSO, 1923)
DB	Domesday Book
DB: Cheshire	P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Cheshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978)
DB: Derbys.	P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Derbyshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978)
DB: Northants.	F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Northamptonshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1979)
DB: Shrops.	F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Shropshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986)
DB: Staffs.	A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976)
DB: Warwicks.	J. Plaister (ed.), *Domesday Book: Warwickshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976)

DB: Worcs.	F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Worcestershire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982)
DRO	Derbyshire County Record Office
EEA XIV	M.J. Franklin (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta Volume XIV: Coventry and Lichfield 1072-1159* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
EEA XVI	M.J. Franklin (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta Volume XVI: Coventry and Lichfield 1160-1182* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
EEA XVII	M.J. Franklin (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta Volume XVII: Coventry and Lichfield 1183-1208* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
EHD I	D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents Volume I* c. *500-1042* (London: Eyre Methuen, 2nd edn, 1979)
FA	*Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids Volume V: Stafford-Worcester* (London: HMSO, 1908)
HR	*Rotuli Hundredorum temp Hen. III and Edw. I Volume I* (London: The Record Commission, 1812)
Leics.	Leicestershire
LRO	Lichfield Record Office
LS	R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975)
OE	Old English
ON	Old Norse
PR	G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Plea Rolls *temp.* Henry III: Suits Affecting Staffordshire Tenants and Abstracted into English', *The William Salt Archaeological Society: Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, 4.1 (1883), pp. 1-126
S	P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Blibliography* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1968) (Online version of revised edition by S.E. Kelly: http://www.trin.cam.ac.uk/chartwww/eSawyer.99/eSawyer2.html)
SA	Shropshire Archives

SHC	*Staffordshire Historical Collections* also known as *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* (This is an ongoing series of publications published by the Staffordshire Record Society, which was called the William Salt Archaeological Society prior to 1936. Four different numbering systems have been used for the series: the First Series (1880-1897) was denoted by volume number and date; the Second Series (1898-1909), which was known as the New Series, was denoted in the same way; the Third Series (1910-1951) was denoted by date only; the Fourth Series (1957-) is denoted by volume number and date.)
SRO	Staffordshire County Record Office
Taxatio	*Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P Nicholai IV circa AD 1291* (London: The Record Commission, 1802)
TR	Tenure Roll relating to Offlow hundred published in S. Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire Volume I* (Stafford: EP Publishing, 1976 [originally published 1798-1801])
TNSFC	*Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club*
TSSAHS	*Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society*
UoB	University of Birmingham Special Collections
Valor	*Valor Eccleiasticus Temp Henr VIII Auctoritate Regis Institutus Volume III* (London: The Record Commission, 1817)
VCH Staffs. III	M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume III* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970)
VCH Staffs. VII	M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume VII: Leek and the Moorlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
VCH Staffs. VIII	J.G. Jenkins (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume VIII* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963)
VCH Staffs. IX	N.J. Tringham (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume IX: Burton-upon-Trent* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2003)
VCH Staffs. XIV	M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume XIV: Lichfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

VCH Staffs. XVII	M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume XVII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976)
VCH Staffs. XX	M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume XX: Seisdon Hundred (part)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)
Warwicks.	Warwickshire
White	W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1834)
WSL	William Salt Library

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The West Midland shires and their significance

The study of the territorial origins of shires in the West Midlands has been greatly hampered by an almost complete absence of reliable documentary evidence. We first have explicit evidence for the existence of the West Midland shires in the early eleventh century when most are named in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and can first map their geographical extent in 1086, using the evidence of Domesday Book. But the circumstances and date of their creation are unrecorded, and their original layout is unknown.

The paucity of evidence for their territorial origins probably explains why the formation of the West Midland shires has generally been addressed only briefly in print, usually in works dedicated to other subjects.[1] This is a great pity. By the time of Domesday Book the shire was the basic unit of administration throughout the West Midlands and most of England. At the end of the eleventh century shire courts, and their dependent territories, fulfilled important military, administrative, judicial, and fiscal functions – roles that the shires retained in the post-Domesday period and beyond. Indeed, shires are still a meaningful part of the West Midlands' administrative landscape, although their present layout differs significantly in places from that of their medieval antecedents. Moreover, there is a strong awareness of the importance of such territorial divisions in late Anglo-Saxon society,[2] and as one scholar has said recently, 'few historically significant aspects of early medieval life were wholly unaffected by the constraints imposed by the formal allocation of

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[1] See below, pp. 5-6.

[2] Two examples of recently published studies of the relationship between people and territory are: W. Davies, G. Halsall & A. Reynolds (eds), *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300-1300* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006); D. Griffiths, A. Reynolds & S. Semple (eds), *Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain* (Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History, 12, 2003).

space'.[3] Investigating what influenced the original layout of shires in the West Midlands will therefore further our understanding of the origins and development of the English medieval administrative landscape, and of the institutions and communities that used it.

Rather than examining the creation of all the West Midland shires, this thesis will investigate the territorial origins of Staffordshire. This approach will allow the viability of models and hypotheses for shire origins in the region to be tested in detail at the level of a single shire, and so will avoid reinforcing the generally superficial treatment that their origins have received in published works. The rationale for studying Staffordshire will be set out shortly.[4] Moreover, while the precise circumstances that dictated the original layout of each of the region's shire's may be different, and so there will obviously be limits to how far it is possible to extrapolate from the example of Staffordshire to a region-wide context, investigating the origins of one shire will nevertheless also throw important light on the methodological issues that confront the study of the formation of the West Midland shires as a whole.

1.2 Staffordshire: geography and historical context

At the time of Domesday Book Staffordshire was approximately 56 miles long and 35 miles wide at widest extent. It was bounded by (clockwise from the north) Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Cheshire. The position of Staffordshire in the Midlands is illustrated on Map 1.

The southern and central parts of the area that came to be known as Staffordshire appear to have fallen within the original heartland of the Mercian kingdom, which was focused on the Upper Trent drainage basin. The Trent rises in

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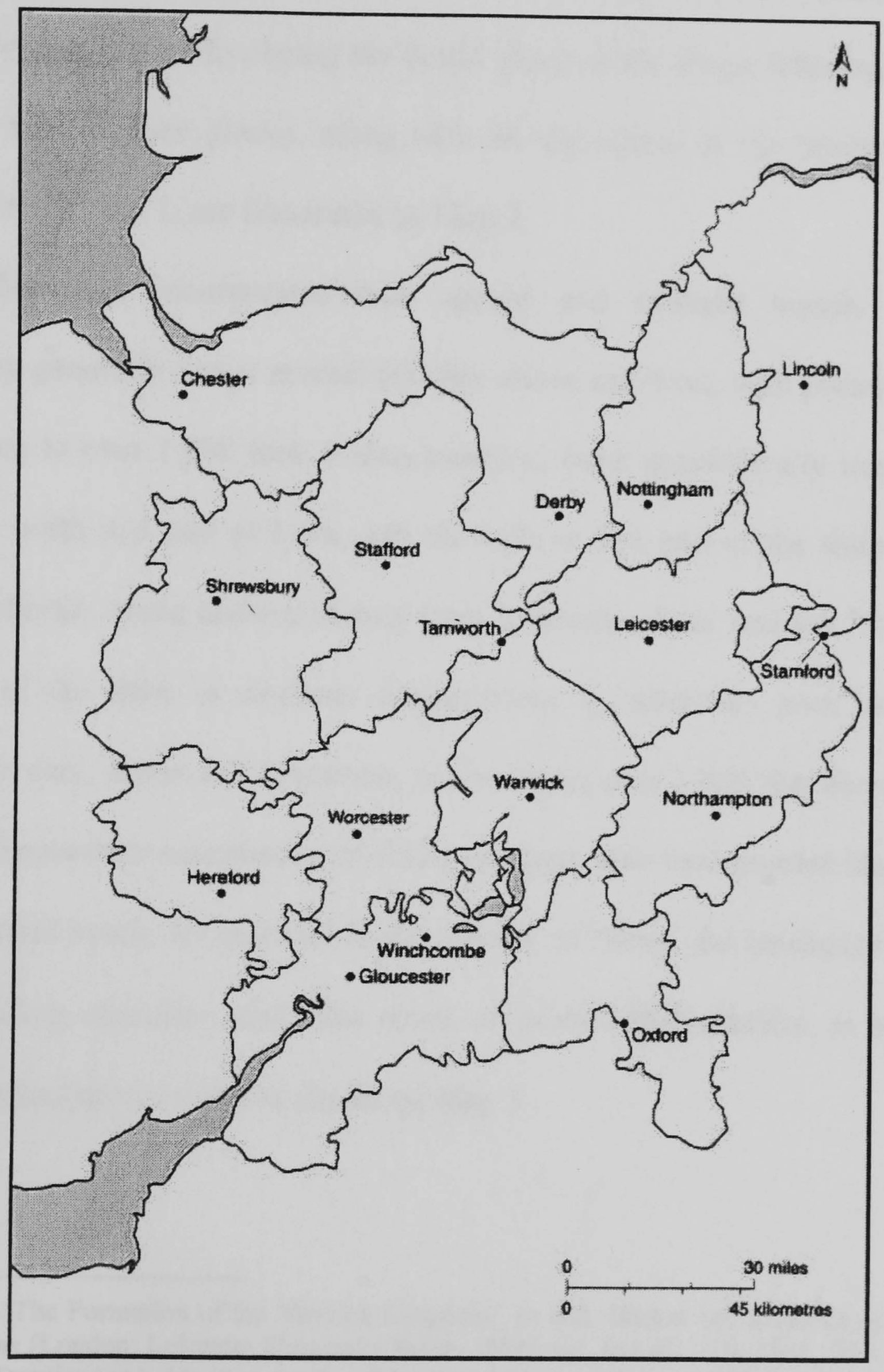
[3] S.R. Bassett, 'Boundaries of Knowledge: Mapping the Land-Units of Late Anglo-Saxon and Norman England', in Davies, Halsall & Reynolds (eds), *People and Space*, p. 116.
[4] See below, p. 31.



Map 1: Shires in midland England in 1086. Small detached portions of Worcestershire are shown shaded

Source: S.R. Bassett, 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), p. 60

North Staffordshire in the parish of Biddulph, and flows through the shire's central belt, leaving Staffordshire in the vicinity of Burton-upon-Trent. Lichfield, located in South-East Staffordshire, was the site of the Mercian bishopric, and Tamworth, situated on the Domesday border between Staffordshire and Warwickshire, was its premier royal centre. Moreover, nearby Repton (Derbyshire) was closely associated with the Mercian monarchy, being the burial place of the kings Æthelbald (757) and Wiglaf (*c.* 840).[5] These places, along with all the others in the Staffordshire area mentioned in Chapter 1, are illustrated on Map 2.

Staffordshire incorporates both upland and lowland terrain. North-East Staffordshire generally lies at around 600 feet above sea level, with pockets of higher ground rising to over 1,000 feet. It thus contains much agriculturally marginal land, particularly north and east of Leek, and the soils in this part of the shire tend to be relatively infertile, being derived mainly from limestone, shale and grit.[6] Much of the north-west of the shire is similarly characterised by relatively poor quality land, derived from clay, marls and sandstone, and rising to over 1,000 feet above sea level in places. The modern conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent also incorporates land over 600 feet. But further south, for instance in the vicinity of Stone, the landscape takes on a more undulating character, and, like much of central Staffordshire, is suitable for pasture.[7] Staffordshire's relief is shown on Map 3.

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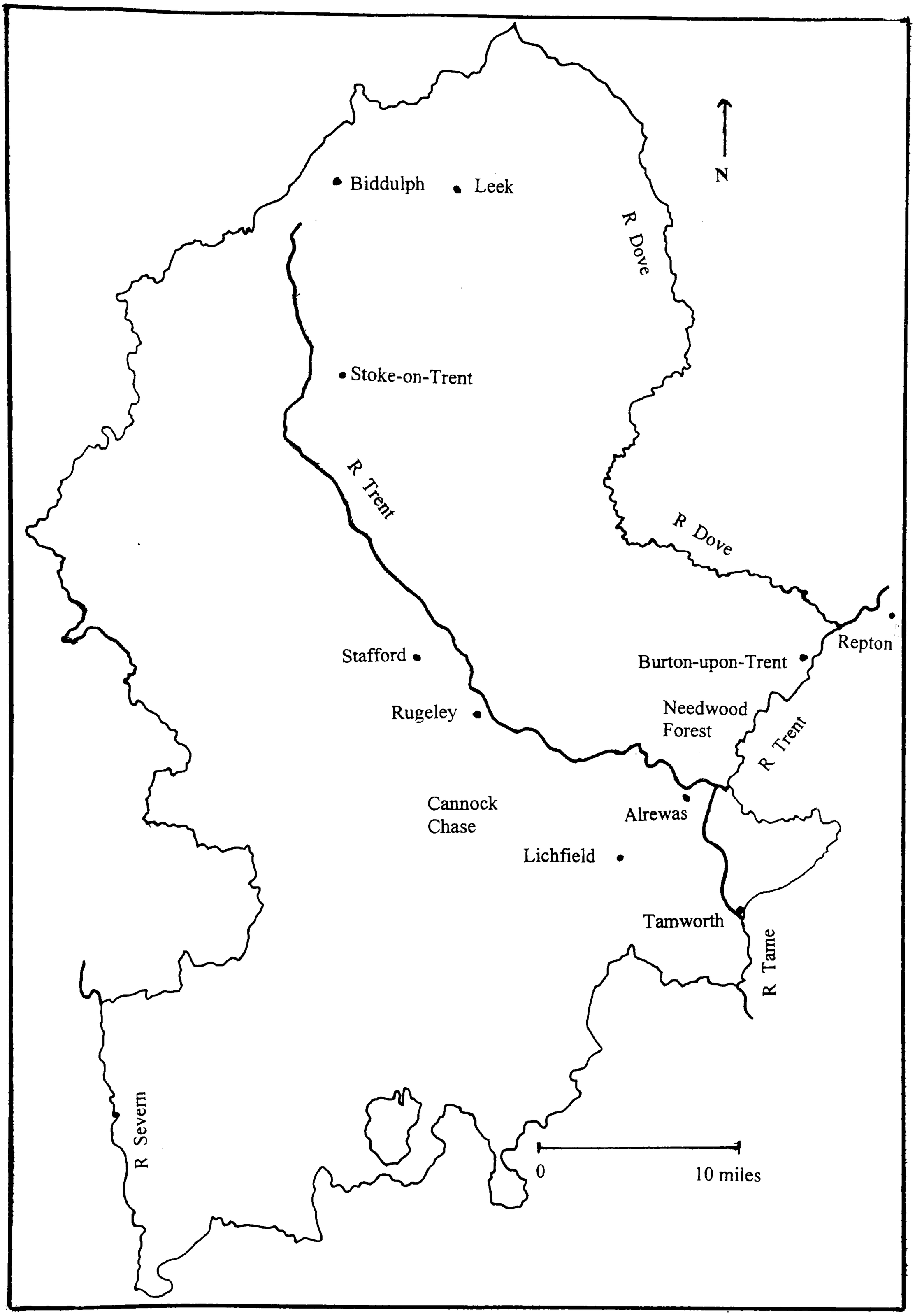
[5] N.P. Brooks, 'The Formation of the Mercian Kingdom', in S.R. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp. 161-62; C.R. Hart, 'The Kingdom of Mercia', in A. Dornier (ed.), *Mercian Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 54.

[6] H.C. Darby & I.B. Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn), pp. 210-12; A.E. Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context of the Royal Free Chapels of South Staffordshire' (unpublished University of Birmingham MPhil thesis, 1988), p. 19; L. Dudley Stamp (ed.), *The Land of Britain: The Report of the Land Utilisation Survey of Britain Part 61: Staffordshire* (London: Geographical Publications, 1945), p. 574.

[7] Darby & Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography*, p. 212; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 19; Stamp (ed.), *Staffordshire*, pp. 571-74, 615-19. Peaty soils, however, mean that there is a small area of very productive land around Audley: *ibid.*, p. 620.



Map 2: Places referred to in Chapter 1

Adapted from R.J.P. Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

The shire's central belt is characterised by better quality land, consisting mainly of an undulating plain at around 350 feet above sea level, but closer to 450 feet in between the rivers Dove and Trent. There are, however, pockets of higher ground, particularly in and around Cannock Chase, and in the Needwood Forest area, and both areas appear to have been sparsely populated at the time of Domesday Book.[8] The geology of this part of the shire consists primarily of Keuper Marl, which produces strong clay or clay-loam soils. These are fertile and favour grassland for dairying, but can also produce rich arable land. The Cannock Hills, however, are covered in bunter pebble beds, which produce stony and relatively infertile soils, and tend to form dry heathland habitats.[9]

Further south-east, much of the area in and around the Trent and Tame valleys lies at *c*. 180 to 250 feet above sea level (although the area around modern Lichfield is around 250 to 350 feet). Below Rugeley the Trent valley opens out and flows over the alluvium of a wide floodplain, being joined by the similarly shallow valley of the Tame just east of Alrewas. Parts of South-East Staffordshire are therefore characterised by relatively fertile soils, and some of the shire's largest and most prosperous Domesday manors are situated along the Trent and Tame valleys.[10] But further south, on the approach to the Birmingham plateau, the land begins to rise, generally being *c*. 400 to *c*. 500 feet, and although soils here are variable, they tend towards heaviness.[11] Much of South-West Staffordshire consists of relatively fertile

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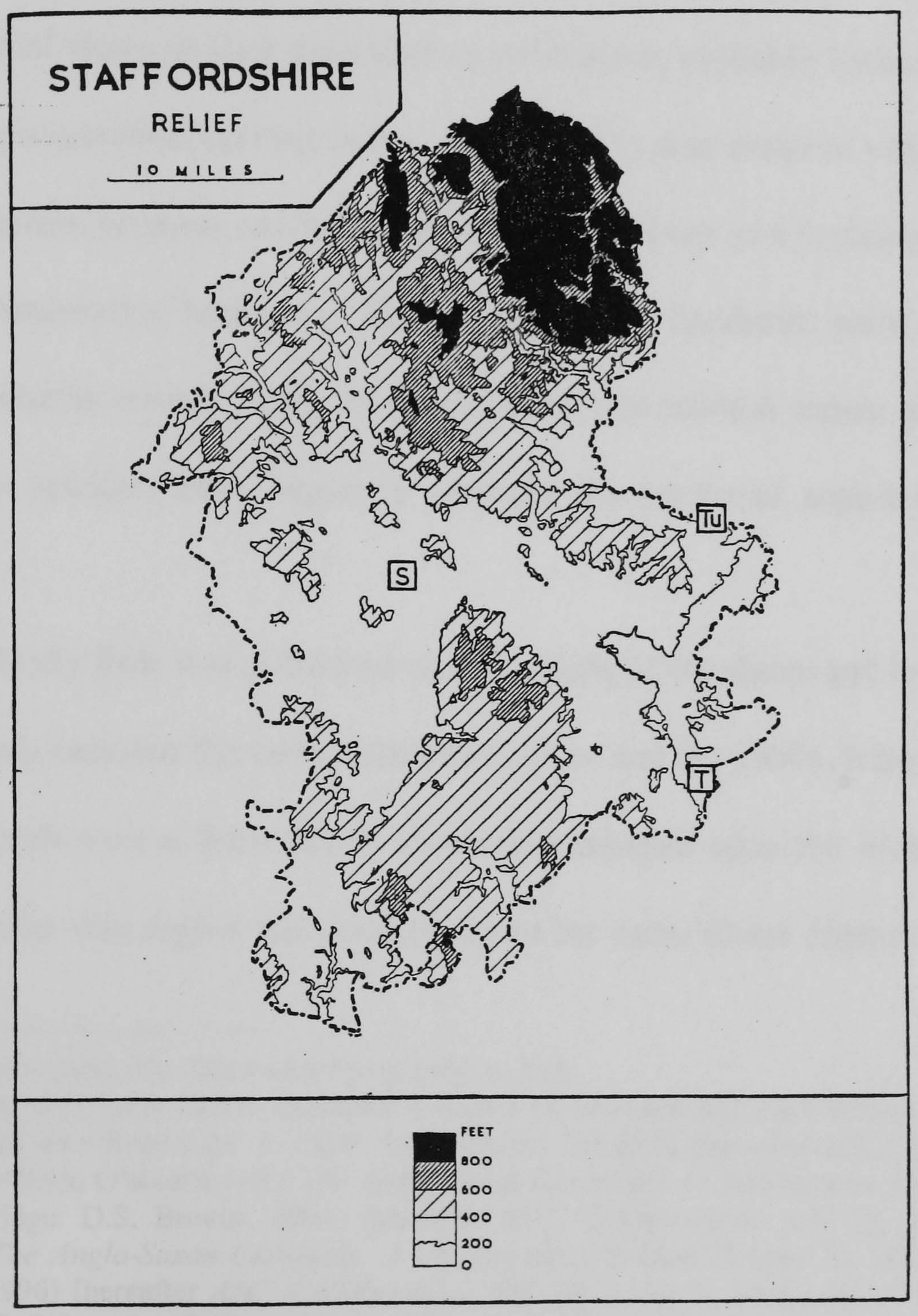
[8] Darby & Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography*, pp. 212-13, 214; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 15; Stamp (ed.), *Staffordshire*, pp. 571 & 574.
[9] Darby & Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography*, pp. 212-13; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 19-21; R. Millward & A. Robinson, *The West Midlands* (London: Macmillan, 1971), p. 15; Stamp (ed.), *Staffordshire*, p. 573.
[10] Derby & Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography*, pp. 213-15.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 214.



Domesday boroughs are indicated by initials: S, Stafford;
T, Tamworth; Tu, Tutbury.

Map 3: Staffordshire: Relief

Source: H.C. Darby & I.B. Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1971), p. 169

soils, although Domesday Book implies that parts of this area were well-wooded in 1086, particularly on the approach to the Severn valley.[12]

1.3 Previous work on the formation of the West Midland shires

It is important to review previous studies of the territorial origins of the shires and hundreds of the West Midlands, and those of Staffordshire itself, in order to provide a context into which this study can be placed. Historians have concentrated more on the early history of shires as land-units than as institutions, probably because shires often appear in a geographical context in our sources.[13] It is also easier to visualise shires in a territorial sense, because, unlike hundreds, they still exist as a meaningful part of the English administrative landscape. This is not true of hundreds: prior to Domesday Book our sources mainly refer to hundreds in institutional terms, and it is only recently that scholars have begun to consider the territorial aspect of their early history.[14]

Relatively little was published on the origins of the shires and hundreds of the West Midlands between the early twentieth century and the 1990s. It has usually been argued that both were a West Saxon innovation imposed upon the West Midlands at some point after that region was brought under the more direct control of Wessex in

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[12] Darby & Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography*, p. 214.

[13] For example, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's record of Edmund and Earl Uhtred travelling 'into Staffordshire and into Shropshire' in 1016: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle [hereafter ASC], MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1016; K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume V: MS. C* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*], pp. 100-01; G.P. Cubbin (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VI: MS D* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*], p. 60; S. Irvine (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VII: MS. E* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*], p. 72; D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents Volume I* c. *500-1042* (London: Eyre Methuen, 2nd edn, 1979), p. 248.

[14] S.R. Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', in N.P. Brooks & C. Cubitt (eds), *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 149; for one of the earliest discussions of hundreds as territories: H.M. Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963 [originally published in 1905]). For the institutional role of hundreds: II Edward 8; F.L. Attenborough (ed.), *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. 120-21.

the early tenth century.[15] It is also usually been argued that this system, already well-established in Wessex by the tenth century, ignored any pre-existing sub-provincial administrative arrangements in the West Midlands. Indeed, such debate as there is, has until recently largely been confined to the issue of *when* this system was transferred to the region, with opinions ranging from the reign of Athelstan (924-939) to the early eleventh century. It was only in the 1990s that scholars began to seriously question this model, arguing that there are good reasons for believing that the secular administrative landscape of the West Midlands may have at least partly reflected pre-existing sub-provincial territories.

Shires and hundreds will be considered separately in this chapter. Although the origins of both land-units are, understandably, generally thought to be connected, this approach should better highlight the fact that scholars have been more confident in explaining the origins of the region's shires than those of its hundreds. Several strands of argument can be detected, which will be assessed in turn. Finally, the results of previous work on the territorial origins of Staffordshire itself will be examined.

1.3.1 The shires

The territorial origins of the West Midland shires have rarely received extensive treatment in print, with the matter often being addressed briefly in works dedicated to other subjects. This has probably both resulted from, and re-enforced, traditional thinking on the matter: that is to say, since the region's shires were considered to be a West Saxon innovation of the tenth or eleventh century, it was thought that their origins could be simply, and briefly, explained. Yet this generally superficial

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[15] This statement is somewhat at odds with the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' model, recently developed by Simon Keynes. This model is discussed below, pp. 18-19 and in Chapter 6.3, pp. 200-09.

treatment, often based on a limited range of written sources, has hindered the emergence of a more complex analysis.

Many early studies explained the origins of the West Midland shires in terms of the hidage – i.e. 'tax' – assessment that each shire carried by the late eleventh century, the implication being that the shires' territorial extents were determined primarily by geld quotas. The hidage totals recorded for the region's shires in two sources, Domesday Book and the County Hidage, have featured prominently in such studies, and while issues surrounding the use of the former source are well documented, and will be discussed at relevant points within this thesis, the County Hidage is less well known.

The 'County Hidage' is the name usually given to four undated manuscripts which include a list of hidage totals for 13 (mostly Midland) shires, including Staffordshire. The manuscripts will hereafter be referred to as CH 'A' (Jesus E29 f. 149r – f. 195r), CH 'B' (Cotton Vespasian A XVIII f. 112v – f. 113r), CH 'C' (Cotton Claudius B VII f. 207r – 207v), and CH 'D' (Thomas Gale, *Historiae Britannicae, Saxonicae, Anglo-Danicae, Scriptores*, vol. XV, p. 748).[16] Although the list of 13 shires with hidage totals is what this document is best known for, it forms only part of all the manuscripts except CH 'D', which consists of the list alone. The others include information on, amongst other things, major roads under royal authority, bishoprics, and the division of shires into three laws (i.e. West Saxon, Mercian and Danish).[17]

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[16] This classification follows that of David Austin: Steven Bassett, pers. comm., based on David Austin lecture at Manchester University of October 1989. F.W. Maitland, on the other hand, lists the manuscripts as Cotton, Claudius, B vii f. 204b [CH 'C']; Cotton, Vespasian, A viii f. 112b [CH 'B']; 'a Croyland MS' [CH 'D']; and 'MS. Jes. Coll. Ox.' [CH 'A']: F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), p. 456.

[17] Steven Bassett, pers. comm., based on David Austin lecture at Manchester University of October 1989.

Nevertheless, only the hidage totals tend to be published, usually in tabulated form, as below:

Table 1: The County Hidage[18]

Shire	CH 'A'	CH 'B'	CH 'C'	CH 'D'	Domesday Book (following Maitland)
Wiltshire	4800	4800	4800	4800	4050
Bedfordshire	1200	1000	1200	1200	1193
Cambridgeshire	2500	2500	2500	2005	1233
Huntingdonshire	850	850	850	800½	747
Northamptonshire	3200	4200	3200	3200	1356
Gloucestershire	3400	2000	2400	2400	2388
Worcestershire	1200	1500	1200	1200	1189
Herefordshire	1200	1500	1500	1005	1324
Warwickshire	1200	1200	1200	1200	1338
Oxfordshire	2400	2400	2400	2400	2412
Shropshire	2400	2400	2300	2400	1245
Cheshire	1200	1200	1300	1200	512
Staffordshire	500	500	500	-	505

It can be seen that the hidage assessments assigned to each shire are not always consistent across the four manuscripts. This means that any arguments based upon the hidage totals rest on (often unstated) choices about which manuscripts are being used, although priority is usually given, not unreasonably, to the figures that agree. Material included in some of the manuscripts is omitted in others; there is, for example, no information in CH 'A' on major roads under royal authority, and, as we have seen, CH 'D' consists solely of the list of 13 shires. Furthermore, the dating of the document is problematic. Although CH 'C', written in Latin and in a twelfth-century hand, is the oldest manuscript, work by David Austin suggests that the exemplar for CH 'A' was likely to have been compiled first. Austin also argues that the lost

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[18] As printed in Maitland, *Domesday Book*, p. 456; also: J.M. Kemble, *The Saxons in England: A History of the English Commonwealth till the Period of the Norman Conquest Volume I* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1876), p. 494.

original for the whole document was probably post-Conquest in origin, perhaps dating from the reign of Henry I (1100-1136).[19]

At the time when most of the work on the West Midland shires was published views on the date of the County Hidage's original compilation were significantly different. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, following the view of Felix Liebermann, it was thought that the four surviving County Hidage manuscripts were based on a document compiled during the eleventh century.[20] F.W. Maitland was the first historian to use the County Hidage to explain the origins of the West Midland shires, and argued that the document should be taken 'very seriously'. Basing his opinion partly on the view of Liebermann, and partly on the similarities between the hidage totals recorded for some of the shires in the County Hidage with those he calculated for the same shires from the evidence of Domesday Book, Maitland believed the County Hidage to be an accurate list of the hidage totals attached to the 13 shires in question compiled at some point before 1086.[21] He felt that the occasions where the hidage totals recorded in the County Hidage differed from his calculations of hidage totals in Domesday Book resulted from scribal error, and this suggested to him that the document may 'have represented an older state of things' (i.e. one that pre-dated Domesday Book, by which time, Maitland implied, changes had been made to the geld quotas of those shires whose hidge totals differed from Domesday).[22]

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[19] Steven Bassett, pers. comm., based on David Austin lecture at Manchester University of October 1989; also: D.H. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 97.
[20] Maitland, *Domesday Book*, p. 456.
[21] Following Maitland, Peter Sawyer has also drawn attention to the similarities between the hidage assessments recorded in the County Hidage and those that can be calculated using Domesday Book: P.H. Sawyer, *From Roman Britain to Norman England* (London: Routledge, 2nd edn, 1998), pp. 228-29.
[22] Maitland, *Domesday Book*, p. 457.

Furthermore, Maitland saw the 'neat sums of hides' (often duodecimal) attributed to some shires by the County Hidage as being significant.[23] He drew attention to the apparently 'neat arrangement' of Worcestershire's administrative landscape, arguing that at the time of the Domesday survey it was 'divided into twelve districts known as hundreds each of which has contained 100 hides'.[24] This was not an isolated case, and Maitland said that in six out of the County Hidage's 13 shires there was 'a connexion of the simplest kind between the hides [recorded in the document] and the [number of Domesday] hundreds'.[25] This clearly implied to Maitland that the territorial extents of the West Midland shires were determined by the 'tax' assessment that each shire should carry, a situation that was still reflected in the hidage totals recorded in the County Hidage and Domesday Book. He said:

> 'other people besides the writer of this list [i.e. the County Hidage] may have been possessed by a theory which connected hides with hundreds, and they may have been the people who were able to give effect to their theories by decreeing how many hides a district must be deemed to contain'.[26]

Like Worcestershire, superficially Staffordshire seems to fit this administrative scheme very neatly indeed. There seems likewise to have been a 'connexion of the simplest kind' between hides and hundreds in this shire too, for Staffordshire was assessed at around 500 hides by 1086 and had five hundreds at that time.

While Maitland did not explicitly state when he thought this plan was enacted, he seems to have believed that the West Midland shires were not created before the tenth century. This is implied in his discussion of the Burghal Hidage, a document of unknown provenance and date which assigns a hidage total to a number of fortified

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 459.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 451 & 457.
[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 459-60.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 460.

places, mostly in Southern England, and which Maitland believed was compiled before the County Hidage, probably around 900. The Burghal Hidage contains a list of hidage assessments attached to each of the fortified places in question.[27] Maitland believed that these may equate to 'military districts' which might 'not have been coincident' with the shires of the County Hidage and Domesday Book, suggesting that he thought that they preceded the shires (since the Burghal Hidage predated those two sources).[28] Nevertheless, since the Burghal Hidage relates mostly to Southern England, it is not clear whether Maitland thought that there was a comparable system of administration in the Midlands which the shires replaced.

Other scholars have speculated more explicitly about who created the West Midland shires, and when they came into being. H.R. Loyn, for example, said that 'the elements of artificiality in the Midland shires with their round number of hides of assessment, grouped around a central stronghold which gave its name to the shire . . . are well known'. He felt that although some historians ascribed 'the achievement of full uniformity in the shiring pattern' of the region to the reign of Edward the Elder (899-924), this may be too early: 'in all matters essential to the existence of a shire', he said, 'including the institution of a regular court at the shire town, the Midlands had followed the West Saxon example by the end of the reign of Edgar' (i.e. 974).[29] Loyn later returned to his view that shires had been imposed in a uniform manner across the West Midlands, and argued that 'by exercising a little ingenuity it is possible to reconstitute from a simple grouping of shires larger units of 120 hundreds'. While most of his groupings were in Southern England, Loyn suggested that a 'similar tally' could be made by adding up the hundreds to be found within the

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[27] See Chapter 5.3.
[28] Maitland, *Domesday Book*, p. 505.
[29] H.R. Loyn, 'The Hundred in England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', in H. Hearder & H.R. Loyn (eds), *British Government and Administration: Studies Presented to S.B. Chrimes* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1974), p. 2.

Domesday shires that constituted the ancient bishoprics of Hereford, Worcester and Lichfield.[30]

A similar argument has recently been put forward by David Hill. Hill argues that by the early tenth century Mercia had been 'completely reorganised administratively, shifting from *regiones* to shires, with each shire based on the territory dependent on a central town, which focused the surrounding areas to the support of the central and eponymous burh'.[31] Hill was in no doubt about when the reorganisation of the region's administrative landscape took place. The course of the late medieval boundary between Staffordshire and Warwickshire, which ran through the heart of the late medieval borough of Tamworth, apparently the Mercian kingdom's premier royal centre, indicated to him that shires were likely to have been created in the region before the end of Edward the Elder's reign, as such 'an anti-Mercian policy [is] unlikely to be found in the reign of Athelstan or later'.[32] Indeed, implicit throughout Hill's paper is the view that the West Midland shires were created according to a relatively straightforward plan. This can be seen most strongly in his attempts to calculate the late Anglo-Saxon wall lengths of West Midland shire towns on the basis of the number of hides allotted to each shire in the County Hidage, by using the formulae for the maintenance of defended walls that is found in one version of the Burghal Hidage.[33]

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[30] *Idem*, *The Governance*, p. 137. A similar argument had already been made by C.S. Taylor who made use of the hidage totals recorded in the County Hidage. Noting that many of the West Midland shires had approximately 1,200 or twice 1,200 hides ascribed to them, Taylor argued that 'the arrangement of the Mercian shires is a purely artificial one, based on a unit of 1,200 hides and its multiples': C.S. Taylor, 'The Origin of the Mercian Shires', in H.P.R. Finberg (ed.), *Gloucestershire Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1957) [originally published in 1898], pp. 27-28, 42. Taylor's ideas will be discussed in more detail below.

[31] D.H. Hill, 'The Shiring of Mercia – Again', in N.J. Higham & D.H. Hill (eds), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 144.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 145.

[33] Taking Stafford as an example, Hill notes that 'a wall length based on the County Hidage worked through the Burghal Hidage equivalence would still only be blocking the neck of land' (at the north of

There are, however, a number of serious problems with a methodology based mainly on the hidage totals recorded in the County Hidage or Domesday Book. Such an approach assumes that when the West Midland shires were created they functioned primarily as 'tax districts', and that their geographical extent was determined by the allocation of a round number of hides to each. It then uses the hidage totals recorded in Domesday Book and the County Hidage to see how the system worked in practice. Furthermore, it is very easy to get drawn into circular arguments when using these figures, something that was acknowledged implicitly by Loyn when he said that 'a little ingenuity' is required to reconstitute the original groupings of shires,[34] and explicitly by Hill, who says that 'one can make the figures fit almost anything. The fact that we know what we want the end product to be leads to manipulation, massaging and downright self-deception'.[35]

Yet considering the relative wealth of information we have relating to the hidage assessment of individual shires it is easy to see why this methodology has been adopted. Indeed, the apparent link between numbers of hundreds and total hidage assessments in some West Midland shires by the late eleventh century cannot be denied. Nevertheless, any approach that is based on 'tax' assessments is bound to prioritise the shires' roles as 'tax districts' in explaining their origins, although we will see that shires had many other functions too which are equally likely to have impinged on their original layout. The sources used also have a number of limitations. The County Hidage gives the barest level of detail about the region's shires, whereas Domesday Book provides only a snapshot of the region's administration many years after all scholars believe that it was created. This may distort our picture of the origins

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Stafford's central, island-type peninsula, upon which its Anglo-Saxon churches were located): *ibid.*, p. 151.

[34] Loyn, *The Governance*, p. 137.

[35] Hill, 'The Shiring', p. 158.

of the West Midland shires, as by 1086 the course of their boundaries may well have been changed in some places: we know, after all, that shire boundaries did not remain unaltered after 1086, and so it would be unwise to assume that they had done so before that date. Moreover, without knowing the date, purpose and origin of the County Hidage it seems unwise to read too much into its figures, and, on its own, the similarity between its hidage totals and those calculated from Domesday Book proves nothing.

The location of the West Midland shire towns within their shires has also been seen as important in throwing light on their origins. At or near the centre of each shire is a place that we know was, or seems very likely to have been, fortified in the late Anglo-Saxon period – something that we already know Hill sees as significant.[36] In the 1920s W.J. Corbett drew attention to this situation in the area between the Rivers Thames and Welland (i.e. Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Middlesex, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire), where, he says, shires were 'marked off from the older West Saxon [ones] by being named from a central fortress'. More recently Julian Whybra has made the same point regarding the Midland shires as a whole.[37] Precisely what the significance of this situation is for the origins of the West Midland shires, beyond apparently suggesting the relative lateness of their creation compared to their West Saxon counterparts, is rarely made clear. Nevertheless, we shall see that the relationship between shire towns

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[36] For further discussion of fortified places in the West Midlands: Chapter 5.

[37] W.J. Corbett, 'The Foundation of the Kingdom of England', in H.M. Gwatwin, J.P. Whitney, J.R. Tanner & C.W. Previté (eds), *The Cambridge Medieval History Volume III: Germany and the Western Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 366; J. Whybra, *A Lost English County: Winchcombeshire in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1990), p. 2. A similar view had previously been expressed by William Stubbs: W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 6th edn, 1903), p. 106. Whybra's work is discussed in more detail below: pp. 16-17.

and the territories attached to them may well throw important light on the origins of the latter.[38]

Most of the debate on shire origins in the West Midlands has been focused on when shires were transferred to that region from Wessex, and so scholars have looked for events that might plausibly provide a context for such a transfer. Many have also seen the absence of pre-eleventh-century documentary references to the region's shires as indicative of their relatively late origin. C.S. Taylor, for example, noted that, apart from Cheshire, there are no references to 'Mercian' shires[39] in sources relating to the period before 1006, when Shropshire is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's annal for that year. Gloucestershire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire, on the other hand, first appear in the annal for 1016, whereas Worcestershire and Herefordshire are not mentioned in the Chronicle until 1038 and 1048 respectively.[40] Cheshire appears in Manuscript C's annal for 980,[41] 'but', Taylor said, 'this manuscript is written apparently in the same hand to 1046, and afterwards in different hands; so that the entry cannot have been written down until at least sixty-six years after 980, and it affords no decisive evidence for the existence of a district known as Cheshire in 980'.[42]

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[38] See Chapter 5.

[39] 'Mercian shires' is a phrase used by Taylor to mean those shires that were established by the kings of England in the area that had once been part of the Mercian kingdom (as opposed to shires created by the Mercian kings).

[40] For 1006: ASC, MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1006; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 91; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 53; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 66; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 241. For 1016: ASC, MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1016; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, pp. 100-01, 103; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, pp. 60 & 62; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, pp. 72-74; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, pp. 248 & 250 [where Whitelock renders '*Gloucestershire*' as 'Gloucester']. For 1038: ASC, MSS 'C' & 'E', 1038; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 107; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 76; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 259. 1048: ASC, MS. 'E', 1048; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 81; D. Whitelock (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 119.

[41] ASC, MS. 'C', 980; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 84; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 232.

[42] Taylor, 'The Origin', pp. 21-24.

Taylor argued for a later origin for the West Midland shires than have many scholars, suggesting that they probably came into being in the early eleventh century. For Taylor, the Midland shires were established to serve a dual role: firstly, for what he termed 'military purposes' in response to the Scandinavian incursions of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries; and, secondly, to facilitate the provision of ships which the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records were ordered to be built '*ofer eall Angelcyn*' ('all over England') in 1008.[43] 'It is evident', said Taylor, 'that inland districts had to contribute [to the provision of ships] as well as the shires on the coast'. Therefore, he argued, 'it would clearly be a very great help to good government in all respects if that huge and shapeless territory [of the Midlands] were portioned out into areas of manageable size'.[44] For Taylor, then, any Mercian sub-provincial administrative structures were swept away when shires were created for the West Midlands in the early eleventh century. His view also implies that only a kingdom as large as England would require administration on the scale and complexity of shires – two ideas which are fairly common in early work on the subject (although for many it was the enlarged 'West Saxon' kingdom of the early tenth century, rather than the kingdom of England, that required administration on this scale). But Taylor was also the first scholar to draw attention to the fact that the roles that the West Midland shires were established to serve might well be important in explaining their origins.

Taylor's paper proved to be influential. H.P.R. Finberg, for example, enthusiastically supported Taylor's views in his study of the lost shire of Winchcombeshire.[45] Indeed, echoes of Taylor's work can be detected in Frank

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[43] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-24. For 1008: ASC, MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1008. OE text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 92; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 241. Also: Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 54; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 66.

[44] Taylor, 'The Origin', pp. 22-23.

[45] Finberg argued that around 1007 the territories previously attached 'for certain purposes' to Worcester, Winchcombe, Oxford, Gloucester, and Warwick 'were reorganized as shires in the full

Stenton's comment that 'the West Saxon supremacy [in the early tenth century] made possible the establishment of a uniform scheme of local administration throughout southern England'.[46] James Campbell has also recently expressed a similar view. He notes that 'the layout of the Midland shires is such that a river forms the spine of each and the shire town lies at a nodal point on the river system', and argues that 'this closely organised relationship between towns and provincial government was largely created by the tenth-century kings'.[47]

Taylor's views have recently been followed very closely by Julian Whybra as part of another study of Winchcombeshire. Like Taylor, Whybra felt it significant that while all the West Saxon shires are recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle before 891, Cheshire is the only 'Mercian' shire that appears before 1000. Moreover, Whybra, like Taylor, felt that the Chronicle's reference in 914 to '*þa menn hi of Hereforda 7 of Gleweceastre*' ('the men of Hereford and of Gloucester'), in a way that implied defined territories were attached to these places at that time was instructive, since it demonstrated that shires did not exist in the West Midlands in the 910s. Whybra said '[the] districts are spoken of as being dependent on towns in such a way that we should certainly expect shires to be mentioned if such administrative districts with well defined boundaries had already been carved out'.[48] Yet we are not

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sense of the word'. His view was based on additions made to Tiberius A xiii, a collection of eleventh-century copies of charters relating to the diocese of Worcester, often known as 'Hemming's Cartulary'. The compilers arranged the land charters into five main headings, after three of which, '*Into Vvincelcvmbe*', '*Into Oxena forda*', and '*Into Gleawecestre*', the word *scire* was later inserted. Finberg agreed with the chronology suggested by Taylor on the basis that 'as Mr Neil Ker hs pointed out, the manuscript in Tiberius A xiii with which we are concerned includes no document of later date than 996, and there are several indications that it was compiled between that year and 1016': H.P.R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1972), p. 230. For 'Hemming's Cartulary': Chapter 6.3, p. 201, n. 68.

[46] F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1971), p. 293.

[47] J. Campbell, 'Power and Authority 600-1300' in D.M. Palliser (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Volume I: 600-1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 53-54.

[48] Taylor, 'The Origins', p. 2; Whybra, *A Lost English County*, pp. 1-3. For Hereford and Gloucester: ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D', 914; OE text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 74; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212. Also: J.M. Bately (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A*

entitled to assume that the West Midland shires were newly created in the early eleventh century simply because they are not mentioned in written sources before then: no one, for example, now believes that places first mentioned in Domesday Book had only recently come into being in 1086.[49] Consequently, there is no reason why the West Midland shires should not have come into being in the tenth century, even though we do not hear about them until the eleventh.

More recently Simon Keynes has also argued that an already mature West Saxon administrative system of shires was transferred to the West Midlands, although has offered a new context to explain this transfer. Keynes, we shall see, has challenged the view that Wessex and Mercia were essentially separate polities until the early tenth century, and instead proposes the existence of a polity, *c.* 880-927, which he calls the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons', and which, he argues, was 'transitional between "Wessex" (with its south-eastern extensions) and "England"'[50]. Keynes suggests that the extension of shires into land north of the River Thames can be interpreted in light of this model; indeed, for Keynes the model allows the transfer to have occurred earlier than is usually thought, perhaps during the reigns of Æthelred and Æthelflæd (*c.* 880-918) who would, he says, in this case have been 'operating under the guiding hand of Alfred and Edward the Elder'. The pretext for the creation of shires north of the Thames 'may', says Keynes, 'have been the establishment of a burghal system in English Mercia'.[51] Keynes's 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' model will not be assessed at this stage because the interpretation of most of the evidence

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Collaborative Edition Volume III: MS A (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986), p. 65; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40.

[49] Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', p. 149.

[50] For example: S. Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in M.A.S. Blackburn & D.N. Dumville (eds), *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 1-45; *idem*, 'England, 900-1016', in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History Volume III:* c. *900* – c.*1024* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 456-84 (at 460-66); *idem*, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', in Higham & Hill (eds), *Edward the Elder*, pp. 40-66.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

used in the thesis does not hinge on the relationship that one envisages existed between 'Wessex' and 'Mercia' in the late ninth and early tenth centuries (i.e. either overlordship on the part of the West Saxons, or in terms of the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons'); the basis of the model will, however, be addressed when the interpretation of a source *turns* on that relationship.[52]

Steven Bassett is one of the few scholars to explore the origins of the West Midland shires in their own right: that is, as an end in itself, rather than as part of a study whose main interests lie elsewhere. Using a multi-disciplinary approach, Bassett notes that archaeological evidence shows that Hereford, Tamworth and Winchcombe (Gloucestershire) had fortifications by no later than the early ninth century. He proposes the existence of a contemporary military system in the Midlands focused on these places and others which, for a variety of reasons, seem likely to have been fortified at a similarly early date, such as Worcester, Shrewsbury and Nottingham. An essential feature of this military system would, he argues, 'have been the allocation to each fortified centre of a rural hinterland from which to draw its manpower'. Indeed, there is no doubt that this is how the later, West Saxon, burghal system worked. The layout of this administrative landscape cannot, he says, have been the same as that of the late eleventh-century shires, because changes would doubtless have caused by, for instance, the suppression of Winchcombeshire in the early eleventh century. Further changes are likely to have occurred in the vicinity of Tamworth, which was divided, we have seen, between Staffordshire and Warwickshire. Nevertheless, Bassett argues that

> 'the West Midland shires portrayed in Domesday Book ultimately derive from a layout of territories which probably existed by the early ninth century. Their initial *raison d'être* would have been purely

[52] See Chapter 6.3, pp. 200-09.

> military: they coexisted with the provinces of Mercia rather than replaced them. Eventually, but by no later than the early eleventh century, they gained the many administrative, judicial, economic and fiscal responsibilities which had been fulfilled until then by the provinces'.

In this way, Bassett clearly distinguishes between the history of the region's shires and their history as institutions. He also suggests that if such a system of sub-provincial territories existed in the middle Anglo-Saxon period, it would mean that 'the use which the West Saxon kings of England made of the West Midland shires is a case of adapting and adopting, not of innovation'.[53] Bassett's model has clear implications for Staffordshire's origins and so will be assessed in detail at a later stage in the thesis.[54] Nevertheless, the model shows how the combination of an intensive local study combined with a multi-disciplinary approach may throw new light on the origins of the West Midland shires.

To sum up so far, it can be seen that scholars have, either implicitly or explicitly, been operating within two basic hypotheses for shire origins in the West Midlands. Traditionally it has been proposed that the region's shires were effectively

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[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 156-57. Bassett has recently developed his model further and says that it his belief that 'in their origins as territories the midland shires of which we first have evidence at the end of the tenth century, and which we can first map only at their late eleventh-century extent, owe much more to the Mercians than to the West Saxons. This is likely to be true both of the shires in the part of the kingdom of Mercia which remained in Anglo-Saxon hands after the partition of 877 and of those in the areas of late ninth-century Scandinavian control and settlement. The building of defences in the late ninth and early tenth centuries at places which had not been fortified before, and the setting up of (sometimes only short-lived) territories from which each derived its manpower, would have interfered significantly with the geography of the earlier Mercian layout. So, too, would the decision which the West Saxons seem to have made that Tamworth should not be a shire town in the newly created kingdom of England. Yet despite these major disruptions, and the one caused by the eleventh-century dissolution of Winchcombeshire, the geography of the midland shires in 1086 is likely to be one which in many of its aspects perpetuates that of the military territories which surrounded the fortified settlements of the kingdom of Mercia': *idem*, 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), pp. 83-84, n. 78. Jeremy Haslam has also suggested the existence of a system of eighth-century fortified places in Mercia which were 'the central places of dependent regions by means of which the military obligations and services [imposed on the kingdom's populace] were organised on a territorial basis'. This builds on Cyril Hart's suggestion that in the East Midlands Leicestershire, Northamptonshire (north-eastwards of Watling Street and south of the River Welland) and Nottinghamshire were at least partly based on administrative districts in existence during the period of Mercian supremacy: Hart, 'The Kingdom of Mercia', p. 52; J. Haslam, 'Market and Fortress in the Reign of Offa', *World Archaeology*, 19 (1987), pp. 77-79.

[54] See Chapter 5.

created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in which either there were no existing sub-provincial territories, or in one in which existing administrative territories were ignored when the shire boundaries were first laid out. More recently, however, it has been argued that the West Midland shires reflect pre-existing land-units, or represent the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units. The same is broadly true for previous work on the region's hundreds.

1.3.2 The hundreds

It is important to consider previous work on the formation of the West Midland region's hundreds because, not unreasonably, the origins of its shires and hundreds are generally viewed as being bound together. Indeed, this is markedly so in the case of Staffordshire.[55] Once again, most work on the origins of the West Midland hundreds was published in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While scholars have been more cautious in assigning dates to their origins, the general message has been the same as for the shires: the hundreds of the West Midlands were imposed on that region by the West Saxon (or English) kings in the tenth or eleventh century.

Corbett, for instance, argued that the hundreds of the area between the Rivers Thames and Welland probably came into being during the reign of Athelstan, and proposed that they resulted from the subdivision of the new shires into smaller divisions for the purposes of taxation, police and justice.[56] H.M. Chadwick, on the other hand, drew attention to the fact that territorial districts in Sweden had borne the name *hundare*, in so-called 'early times', and argued that hundreds were established

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[55] See below, pp. 26-30.

[56] Corbett, 'The Foundation', p. 366. His views were echoed by Helen Cam: H.M. Cam, '*Manerium cum Hundredo*: the Hundred and the Hundredal Manor', in *eadem*, *Liberties and Communities in Medieval England: Collected Studies in Local Administration and Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), pp. 84 & 90.

first in those parts of England that had fallen under Scandinavian rule in the ninth and tenth centuries. He suggested that they were subsequently adopted more widely and so had been borrowed from what he termed 'Danish custom'.[57] Chadwick felt it unlikely that hundreds existed in England during the reign of Edward the Elder given the term's 'remarkable' absence in Athelstan's law codes. He also suggested that 'these hundreds were not used for administrative purposes before the reign of Edmund' (939-945).[58]

Henry Loyn, however, offered a different context for the establishment of hundreds, arguing that they probably grew out of public meetings decreed by Edward the Elder which were similar to the later hundred courts:

> 'Faced with the specific problem of cattle-theft and the more general problems of establishing a general peace over a wide area of diverse traditions, Edward ordered his chosen servants to regularize district meetings in convenient territorial divisions (often expressed as 100 hides in Mercia)'.[59]

Loyn here picks up on another common theme in the historiography – the fact that by the time of Domesday Book, many West Midland hundreds apparently carried 'tax' assessments of round numbers of hides (usually 100 or 120 hides). Similarly, Frank Stenton argued that 'in many parts of the midlands the assessment of each hundred approximated to a round one hundred hides'. The fact, however, that such a close correspondence in the south of England is most unusual 'does not', he said, 'disprove the theory that in origin the hundred was a district assessed to public burdens at a round hundred hides. The hundred of the midlands was probably the result of the deliberate remodelling of administrative geography carried out in this

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[57] Chadwick, *Studies*, pp. 245-46, 248.
[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 244-45. Frank Stenton also noted that hundreds are not mentioned by name prior to the reign of Edgar: Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 293.
[59] Loyn, *The Governance*, p. 141.

region in the tenth century. Wessex, and the south of England generally, had never been thus treated'.[60]

These comments echo those made by Maitland regarding the correlation between the late eleventh-century hidage total of some West Midland shires and the number of their Domesday hundreds. It is unsurprising that historians have sought to link the two: the term 'hundred' raises expectations that such territories should consist of a hundred of *something*. Indeed, it cannot be denied that some West Midland hundreds do seem to have been assessed at around a hundred hides in 1086. But the original significance of Old English *hundred* in its administrative context is not known, and so the word may not have been related to the 'tax' assessments attached to these territories when they were created. Indeed, as Helen Cam has argued, 'the fact that in many instances a hundred is assessed at a hundred hides does not prove that the district was created for the purpose of taxation'.[61]

Conversely, a number of scholars have argued that hundreds were already in existence by the tenth century. Talking about hundreds throughout England as a whole, William Stubbs argued that the hundred as an institution 'has its origin far back in the remotest German antiquity, but the use of it as a geographical expression is discoverable only in comparatively late evidences'. He noted that in 'Germania' the word had long been regarded as 'denoting simply a division of a hundred hides of land; as the district which furnished a hundred warriors to the host; as representing the original settlement of the hundred warriors; or as composed of a hundred hides, each of which furnished a single warrior'. He went on to say that 'it is very probable . . . that the [Anglo-Saxon] colonists of Britain arranged themselves in hundreds of warriors; it is not probable that they carved the country into equal districts',

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[60] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 298.
[61] Cam, '*Manerium*', p. 84.

something which would account for the lack of standardisation in the size of hundreds when we can first map them. Indeed, he felt that at first 'it was enough that a hundred court should be erected in every convenient district'.[62] He also argued that, once hundreds were established, 'their extent and boundaries [must] have been determined [by] the courses of the rivers, the ranges of the hills, the distribution of estates to the chieftains and the remnants of British independence'.[63]

More recently, Steven Bassett has set out an alternative model for the territorial origins of the hundreds of the West Midlands. Bassett notes that the parishes served by mother-churches of seventh- or early eighth-century foundation are often thought to be coterminous with administrative territories that in the seventh century were likely to be termed *regiones*. He argues that discovering the extent of a region's mother-church parishes should therefore allow a comparison to be made between the geography of the region's hundreds and that of its earlier administrative units (as represented in the outline of the mother-church parishes with which they were arguably coterminous).[64] He applied this model to the hundreds of the diocese of Worcester at their earliest discoverable extent, in 1086, and found that there was a positive spatial relationship between the geography of the diocese's hundreds and that of its mother-church parishes, with hundreds often comprising one or more mother-church parishes.[65] He also felt that some of these mother-church parishes look to be of pre-tenth-century origin, and this, argues Bassett, indicates that, as was the case with the West Midland region's shires, there are no signs that the hundreds of Worcester diocese 'were created in a unorganised landscape, or ruthlessly imposed in place of one with a radically different administrative geography'. He proposes that the West

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[62] Stubbs, *The Constitutional History*, pp. 104-05.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 106.
[64] Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', pp. 158-60.
[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 160-72.

Saxon monarchy nevertheless played an important role in influencing the layout of the diocese's hundreds, as they did with the layout of the West Midland shires, but that this role was 'largely confined to deciding the precise composition of each hundred so as to achieve a coherent and manageable system'.[66]

The extent to which this model can be shown to have operated in practice is bound up with the controversial issue of when the diocese's landscape of mother-church parishes was created. While many scholars argue that this landscape came into being in the seventh or early eighth century, others do not believe that this happened until tenth century or afterwards. This complex issue will be fully addressed at a later stage in the thesis.[67] Indeed, Bassett notes that in parts of Worcester diocese, such as the private hundred of Oswaldslow, it is hard to determine the layout of hundreds in 1086, which makes a direct comparison between hundreds and early parishes difficult. But he argues that even in Oswaldslow there is a positive spatial relationship between the territories served by churches of seventh- or eighth-century foundation and the hundreds recorded by Domesday Book, which, he suggests, may show that it developed out of a layout of early territories that had served as, among other things, the parishes of churches of middle Anglo-Saxon origin.[68]

To sum up, most scholars have worked within the view that the shires and hundreds of the West Midlands were effectively created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in which either there were no sub-provincial territories, or in one in which there were such territories but the layout of these territories was ignored. The extension of more direct West Saxon control over the West Midlands in the early tenth century has often been seen as a suitable context for the creation of shires and hundreds, although

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[66] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
[67] See Chapter 7.1, pp. 237-40.
[68] Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', pp. 169-72.

scholars have tended to be more confident in proposing dates for the creation of shires in the region than they have for that of hundreds. The hidage assessments that both land-units carried at the time of Domesday Book have also been seen as important in determining the layout of each, particularly so by scholars working in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In recent years, however, scholars have argued that the region's late Anglo-Saxon administrative landscape may reflect pre-existing territorial arrangements.

1.3.3 Staffordshire

Little work on Staffordshire's origins has been published since the early twentieth century. Most studies have assumed that Staffordshire was effectively created on a 'blank slate' without reference to any pre-existing administrative arrangements. They have also, broadly, followed the methodology established by Maitland, and have taken as their basis the hidage assessment recorded for the shire in the County Hidage and Domesday Book.

For some scholars the apparently straightforward relationship between Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hidage assessment (approximately 500) and the number of its Domesday hundreds (five) has been very significant in explaining the shire's origins. Indeed, superficially, Staffordshire conforms extremely well to an administrative plan which dictated that each West Midland hundred and shire should be assessed in a round number of hides. David Hill, for instance, has drawn attention to the apparently neat relationship between Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hidage assessment and its five Domesday hundreds (named Cuttlestone, Offlow, Pirehill, Seisdon and Totmonslow), and although Hill does not comment directly on what light this relationship threw on Staffordshire's origins, he clearly implies that

when Staffordshire was created, it was divided into five hundreds each of which carried a geld assessment of around a hundred hides. Hill also shows that such an apparently straightforward relationship is rare in the West Midland shires, with only Worcestershire enjoying a similarly neat correlation between its Domesday hidage assessment and the number of its hundreds.[69]

It is also usually proposed that in 1086 the shire's hundredal landscape was remarkably neat, and that the shire was divided into five discrete hundreds at that time. A typical reconstruction of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds is shown on Map 4, which is markedly different to the complex layout of hundreds in some other West Midland shires. For example, Worcestershire's hundreds appear to have been tortuously interlocked in 1086 and individual hundreds often included detached sections surrounded by areas belonging to others.[70] Staffordshire's apparently neat hundredal landscape may also have encouraged scholars to view the shire as being created according to a relatively straightforward plan.

But it is often argued that Staffordshire's hundreds did not carry a 'tax' assessment of around a hundred hides apiece in 1086.[71] R.W. Eyton, for instance, calculated that Offlow hundred would have been assessed at approximately 119 hides in 1086, Seisdon hundred at around 167, Cuttlestone at just over 120, Pirehill at a

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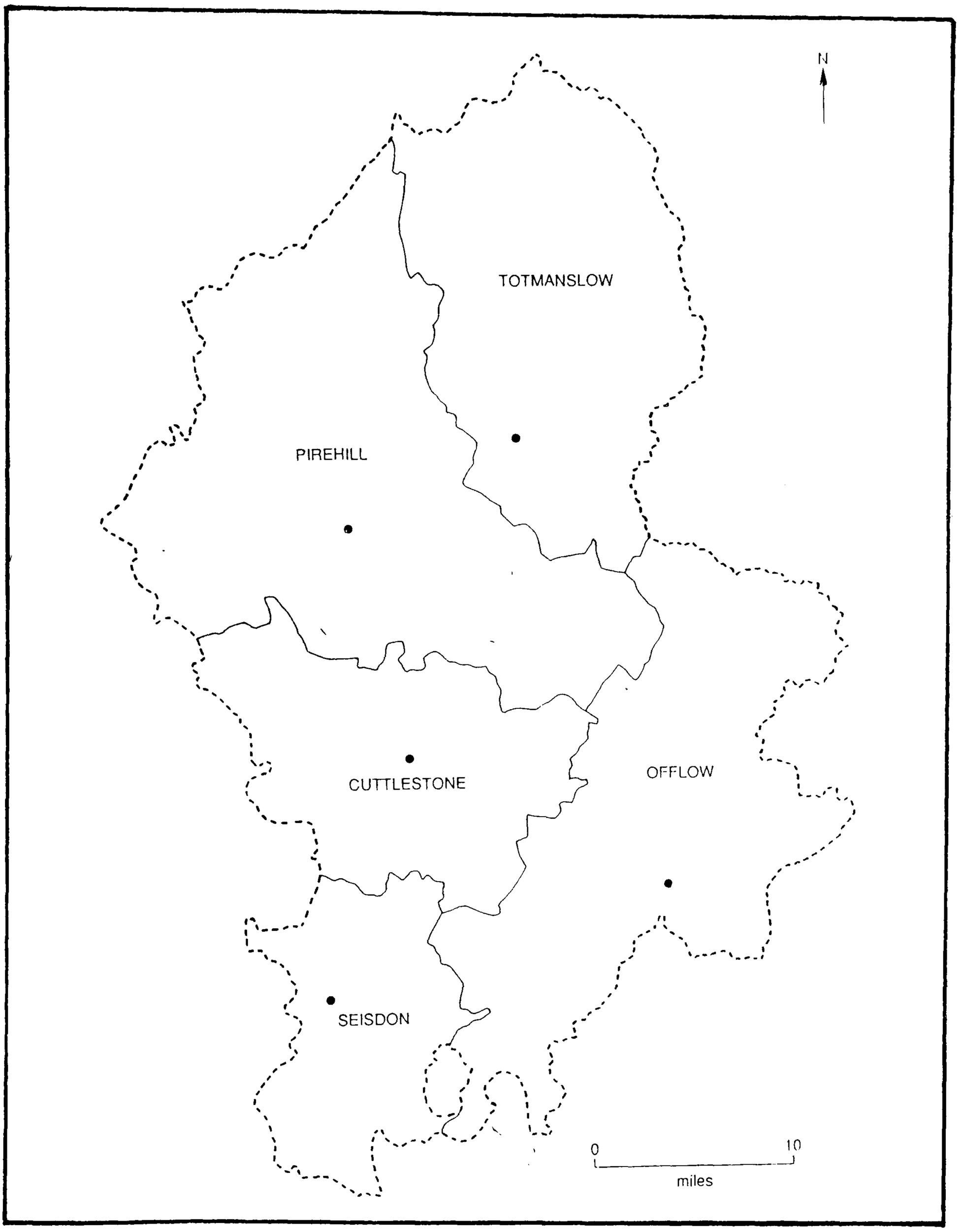
[69] Hill states that at Worcester the correlation between 'the length of the [late Anglo-Saxon] wall (converted [through a formula which we shall see appears in one version of the Burghal Hidage]) into hides equalling 1115 hides), the Burghal Hidage figure (1200 hides), the County Hidage figure (1200 hides), the Domesday Hundreds (12) and the Domesday Hides (1189), is striking and must form a strong basis for claiming that recent work at Worcester confirms the theory that the Burghal Hidage lies behind the calculation of the areas to be dependent on the West Mercian fortifications and therefore the shiring of Mercia'. He later draws attention to the superficially similar connection between hides and hundreds in Staffordshire by saying that 'the County Hidage gives Staffordshire 500 hides and there are five hundreds': Hill, 'The Shiring', pp. 149, 151 & 157. Also: *idem*, 'The Calculation and Purpose of the Burghal Hidage', in *idem* & A.R. Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 96.

[70] See Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', pp. 160-72; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Worcestershire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982), Maps.

[71] The basis of these reconstructions is discussed in Chapter 2.



Map 4: A typical reconstruction of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086

Source: M. Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 143

fraction below 93 and Totmonslow at just over 19.[72] The accuracy of these figures is, however, open to serious doubt. In the time since Eyton published his work on the Staffordshire, scholars have become increasingly aware that reconstructing hundreds from the evidence of Domesday Book is rarely straightforward, and Eyton did not fully explain the basis of the reconstructions that underpin his calculations.[73]

Josiah C. Wedgwood was the first scholar to try to explain why, according to Eyton's calculations, only Pirehill hundred carried an assessment of around a hundred hides in 1086. He proposed that Staffordshire originally comprised four and a half 'long' hundreds, with Seisdon carrying an assessment of 180 hides, and Cuttlestone and Offlow 120 hides apiece. The adjacent hundreds of Pirehill and Totmonslow, would originally have been a single land-unit assessed at 120 hides, but, argued Wedgwood, then fragmented into two units once assessed at 90 and 30 hides respectively.[74] Why a duodecimal system was used for the hidage assessment of Staffordshire's hundreds is not explained, but Wedgwood may have reasoned that because Staffordshire lay immediately west of Derby, which was under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the tenth century and whose shire formed part of the so-called Danelaw by the eleventh,[75] and because a duodecimal system of calculation is often held to have predominated in the Danelaw,[76] such a system may have been used in the Staffordshire area too. Moreover, the model is based on a small range of written

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[72] R.W. Eyton, *Domesday Studies: An Analysis and Digest of the Staffordshire Survey* (London: Trubner, 1881), tables opposite pp. 58, 66, 70, 74 & 96.

[73] For example: F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Northamptonshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1979), Notes. For further discussion of the basis of Eyton's reconstructions: Chapter 2.

[74] J.C. Wedgwood, 'Early Staffordshire History', *The William Salt Archaeological Society: Collections for a History of Staffordshire* [hereafter *SHC*], 1916, p. 156. Nevertheless, Wedgwood also argued that 'it is a mistake to attach too much importance to the effort to make a Hundred into a hundred hides, long or short . . . "cooking" hides is an attractive pastime, but vain': *ibid.*

[75] For Derby: ASC, MSS 'B', 'C' & 'D', 917; S. Taylor (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume IV: MS B* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*], p. 50; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 214. For the extent of the 'Danelaw' and the date the term was first used: Chapter 6.3, pp. 197-99.

[76] J.H. Round, *Feudal England: Historical Studies on the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1895), pp. 71-73.

sources and there is a hint of circularity about it: scholars may have operated under the assumption that Staffordshire's hundreds 'ought' to have carried 'tax' assessments of round numbers of hides at their inception, and then worked out how such a system operated in practice.

Wedgwood's model proved to be influential and most scholars who have worked on Staffordshire's territorial problems have repeated it.[77] There is, however, disagreement over when this plan would have been implemented. Wedgwood, for instance, put forward a very complex argument that indicated to him that Staffordshire's hundreds were probably created at around the turn of the tenth century.[78] Charles Bridgeman and Gerald Mander, on the other hand, proposed that the origins of Staffordshire's hundreds could be traced back to the earliest meeting places of the region's Anglo-Saxon 'tribes'. These 'tribes', they argue, 'were eventually assessed at, or deemed to contain, so many hides or taxable figures, some

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[77] For example: C.G.O. Bridgeman & G.P. Mander, The Staffordshire Hidation', *SHC*, 1919, p. 181; F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in [no named ed.] *The Staffordshire Domesday* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1991), p. 27.

[78] The substance of Wedgwood's argument can be outlined as follows: his reconstructed Domesday boundary between Cuttlestone and Pirehill hundreds dissected the area that Wedgwood felt was originally dependent on Stafford's church. He proposed that 'the position of Stafford itself and of the parish relative to this boundary [i.e. the southern boundary of Pirehill hundred], as well as the fact that Stafford is not as are other capitals the *caput* of a Hundred, tends to show that the Staffordshire hundreds are older than the castle built by Ethelfleda in 913'. Wedgwood felt it unlikely, however, that the shire's hundreds were created between 884 and 913, because their boundaries comprehensively ignored Watling Street, which, he argued, was 'a very real factor in English geography' at that time (Wedgwood here doubtless referring to a peace settlement made in the late ninth century which, we shall see, is often thought to delimit a boundary agreed between Alfred the Great and the Scandinavian king Guthrum along the line of Watling Street: Chapter 6.3). From 870 to 884, asserted Wedgwood, 'Staffordshire was entirely in the hands of the Danes [and so] the Hundreds could not have been formed in those years'. But, he argued, having pushed the date of the creation of the shire's hundreds to before 870, 'you may push it back to the time of Offa (755-96) before you will discover a time sufficiently peaceful, or a ruler sufficiently strong, to put hides into Hundreds and to tax them and to judge them'. This date, it seems, was too early, although Wedgwood did not explain why. Consequently, since Wedgwood had found little evidence of 'five-hide units' in Pirehill or Totmonslow hundreds (a reference to the 'five-hide rule' set out by Maitland), he proposed that Cuttlestone, Offlow and Seisdon hundreds were created in the period 878-913, whereas Pirehill and Totmonslow hundreds were created 'in later safer times when the five-hide principle had been forgotten': *ibid.*, pp. 159-60. For the 'five-hide rule', which proposes that Domesday vills were often assessed in five-hide multiples: Maitland, *Domesday Book*, pp. 120-21. For Castle Church, the section of Stafford's mother-church parish which Wedgwood proposes was divided from Pirehill hundred: Chapter 7.5.2, pp. 284-85.

more, others less, according to the degree of population', although the ideal figure, they suggest, was one hundred or 120 hides. They do not discuss who is likely to have organised these land-units and when this process is likely to have occurred, but Bridgman and Mander said that 'having been given its quota it was the business of the hundred to allocate these hides among its vills', and that Staffordshire eventually took its shape from these hundreds.[79] Alternatively, and seeking to explain why Staffordshire's hidage assessment was much smaller than for other West Midland shires, Frank Thorn has argued that 'if the 500 hides [of the County Hidage] is a true figure, and not a deduction from the fact that the shire contained five hundreds, it is possible that [Staffordshire] was a poor and wasted rump of land left after the rest of Mercia, apart from the Danelaw proper, had been laid out into shires in multiples of 600 hides'. He proposes that alternatively the shire had once formed part of the 2,400 hides that were allotted to Warwick by the Burghal Hidage.[80]

It can therefore be seen that superficially Staffordshire conforms well to the traditional hypothesis for shire origins in the West Midlands. There appears to be a straightforward relationship between its hidage assessment in 1086 and the number of its Domesday hundreds (although it has often been argued that the shire's hundreds did not each carry a 'tax' assessment of a hundred hides when they were created). This, combined with an apparently neat and coherent hundredal geography in 1086, has encouraged scholars to view the shire as being effectively created on a 'blank slate', and according to an administrative plan that dictated that each of its hundreds should be assessed in round numbers of hides. But it is clear that the question of

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[79] Bridgman & Mander, 'The Staffordshire Hidation', pp. 154-56.
[80] Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 23, n. 3. Wedgwood had already made a similar point regarding: Wedgwood, 'Early Staffordshire History', p. 157. For discussion of the Burghal Hidage: Chapter 5.

Staffordshire's origins requires urgent reassessment. Previous studies of the shire have been based on a limited range of written sources, and the reconstruction of the shire's late eleventh-century hundreds which underpin them is untested.

Staffordshire may therefore be well placed to make an important contribution to our understanding of the formation of the West Midland shires. The two hypotheses for shire origins in the West Midlands set out above will be tested in detail against this shire. These are, firstly, that the region's shires were effectively created on a 'blank slate', i.e. either in a landscape in which either there were no sub-provincial territories, or in one in which there were such territories, but the layout of these territories was ignored; and, secondly, the region's shires may reflect pre-existing territorial arrangements. Since Staffordshire superficially seems to correspond well to the first of these hypotheses, the shire may offer a useful opportunity to show how this model operated in practice. Alternatively, if it were to be shown either that the shire does not correspond to this model, or that there are good grounds for thinking that its geographical extent reflected pre-existing territorial arrangements, such a conclusion would raise doubts over the usefulness of the first of our hypotheses for explaining the origins of West Midland shires as a whole. This would be the case especially for those shires that do not seem to have a neat relationship between their Domesday hidage total and the number of their Domesday hundreds, or which do not appear to have a neat layout of hundreds in 1086.

Given the paucity of available written sources, a multi-disciplinary approach will be used in the thesis. This will involve a re-examination of the written material for Staffordshire's origins, which will, where appropriate, be co-ordinated with a review of archaeological, topographical and place-name evidence. This methodology has been increasingly used in recent years to illuminate the early history of areas

where the written record has yielded little information – for example, in the published work of Steven Bassett on the West Midlands, Jane Croom on Shropshire, and Dawn Hadley on the Northern Danelaw. Non-documentary sources can provide us with invaluable information about the early history of areas where relatively few written sources survived, although rarely, if ever, provide us with the sort of specific historical information that we find in written evidence. The advantages and limitations of these different types of evidence will be set out in more detail at relevant points within the thesis.

The thesis will begin by examining in detail the current model for Staffordshire's origins and then will explore the viability of other models for the shire's creation. Chapter 2 will reassess Domesday Book's evidence for the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086 and investigate whether it is possible to calculate reliably the number of hides attached to each. Chapter 3 will assess how far the *c*. 500 hides recorded for Staffordshire in Domesday Book is likely to reflect the shire's original hidage assessment. Chapter 4 will investigate how far the natural topography of the Staffordshire area may have influenced the course of the shire's boundary. Conversely, Chapter 5 will explore how far the roles that Staffordshire served may have impinged on its original geographical extent. Chapter 6 will investigate whether the shire is likely to have fallen under Scandinavian rule during the Scandinavian raids of the ninth century, and, if so, what would be the implications of such a period of Scandinavian rule for any continuity in administrative arrangements in the Staffordshire area. Finally, Chapter 7 will further explore the origins of the shire's hundreds by assessing what spatial relationship existed between the layout of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds and that of the shire's early parochial

geography. Having reviewed the available evidence, the Conclusion will discuss the likely circumstances that led to the creation of a land-unit called Staffordshire.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to assess the viability of the traditional model for Staffordshire's origins. It has usually been proposed that the West Midland shires and hundreds were a West Saxon innovation, imposed upon the region as, or after, that region was brought under more direct West Saxon control in the early tenth century.[1] Specifically, scholars have often argued that the geographical extent of the region's shires was determined by the hidage or 'tax' assessment that each shire carried when it was created. Thus, it is usually implied that the region's shires were effectively created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in which there were no existing sub-provincial territories, or in one in which existing administrative territories were ignored when the shire boundaries were first laid out.

Many scholars also believe that when the West Midland shires were created, each of their hundreds was assessed for tax purposes at a round number of hides. We have seen that Staffordshire is incorporated into this model in two ways. Firstly, some scholars have noted the apparently close numerical correlation between the 'tax' assessment of approximately 500 hides recorded for the shire in the County Hidage and Domesday Book, and the number of the shire's Domesday and late medieval hundreds (five). The implication of this situation is clear, or at least is clearly implied: Staffordshire's original territorial extent, they suggest, was determined by a plan that dictated that each of its hundreds should be assessed at a hundred hides.[2] Alternatively, scholars have used the evidence of Domesday Book to calculate the late eleventh-century hidage assessment of each of Staffordshire's hundreds (named

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[1] See Chapter 1.3.1.
[2] See the Chapter 1.3.3.

Seisdon, Offlow, Cuttlestone, Pirehill and Totmonslow respectively). On the basis of these calculations it has often been argued that the original hidage assessments of the shire's hundreds was not, in fact, uniform. Instead, and with the knowledge that in some parts of England people worked to a duodecimal system rather than a decimal one, it has been proposed that Staffordshire originally comprised four and a half 'long' hundreds, with Seisdon hundred originally being assessed at 180 hides, Cuttlestone and Offlow hundreds at 120 hides apiece. It is argued that Pirehill and Totmonslow hundreds once comprised a single land-unit assessed at 120 hides, but then fragmented into two separate units, originally assessed at 90 and 30 hides respectively.[3]

In either case it can be seen that scholars have operated under the assumption that Staffordshire's original geographical extent was determined by a plan that dictated that each of its hundreds should be assessed for tax purposes at a round number of hides. Yet the evidential basis of this model and its applicability to Staffordshire have never been scrutinised in detail. Indeed, in the time that has elapsed since most work on Staffordshire's origins was published, views on the likely date of the County Hidage's composition have changed,[4] and scholars have increasingly acknowledged that reconstructing the layout of hundreds from the evidence of Domesday Book is rarely straightforward.[5] The remainder of this chapter will therefore, firstly, assess what reliable conclusions can be drawn from the hidage total recorded for Staffordshire in the County Hidage, and, secondly, assess how far it is possible to reconstruct the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds at the time of

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[3] See Chapter 1.3.3, pp. 27-29.
[4] See Chapter 1.3.1, pp. 8-9.
[5] D. Roffe, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), pp. 47-51. Also: S.R. Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', in N.P. Brooks & C. Cubitt (eds.), *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 157.

Domesday Book reliably, and thereby calculate accurately the number of hides attached to each in 1086.

2.2 The County Hidage

It has already been seen that little has been published on the textual history of the County Hidage since the late nineteenth century. At that time it was believed that the alleged exemplar for the four extant County Hidage manuscripts was probably compiled at some point during the eleventh century, an argument based almost entirely on the viewpoint of Felix Liebermann. It has been seen that this, combined with a close correlation between the hidage totals recorded for some of the shires in the County Hidage and those that F.W. Maitland had calculated from Domesday Book, led Maitland to argue that the document should be taken 'very seriously'. His confidence has perhaps encouraged other scholars to view the County Hidage as an essentially reliable source for the hidage assessment carried by the 13 shires listed within it prior to the Norman Conquest.[6] More recently, however, historians have begun to question Liebermann's views, and in the 1980s it was argued that the exemplar for the four manuscripts was probably post-Conquest in origin, perhaps dating from the reign of Henry I (1100-1136).[7] This would arguably make the document much less reliable as a source for the hidage assessments of the shires in question in the late Anglo-Saxon period.

Yet much more problematic is the fact that the County Hidage gives no clear indication of its purpose. We therefore do not know whether, for instance, it provides an accurate account of the tax assessments of those 13 shires at the (unspecified) time

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[6] F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), pp.456-57.
[7] Steven Bassett, pers. comm. based on a David Austin lecture of October 1989; D.H. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 97.

when the alleged exemplar was compiled, or whether it represents a scheme for the rationalisation of their hidage assessments. Alternatively, it could merely be an idealised account of those hidage assessments, compiled at an unknown date and for an unknown reason. Thus, since the County Hidage provides no clues about its date of origin, purpose or source, it seems very unwise to use the document as the basis for arguments about the territorial origins of any of the 13 shires included within it.

2.3 Domesday Book

The issues that surround Domesday Book's evidence for the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086 are far more complex. But before addressing how the layout of the shire's late eleventh-century hundreds have been reconstructed and hidage totals calculated for each, a number of general objections to the view that Staffordshire's hundreds were necessarily originally assessed in round numbers of hides need to be made.

Firstly, Domesday Book provides us with only a snapshot of an administrative landscape that all scholars are agreed originated at least seventy years before that source was compiled. Scholars have therefore tended to see any variations in the layout of shires and hundreds across the West Midlands in the late eleventh century as the result of the slow 'breakdown' of an originally uniform system of administration. But although hundreds in other shires seem to have been assessed in round numbers of hides in the late eleventh century, this does not mean that Staffordshire's hundreds must have originally carried a similarly neat 'tax' assessment.[8] Indeed, it is easy to

[8] Steven Bassett has noted although the combined assessment of the manors in Esch hundred in Worcestershire was precisely one hundred hides, Ledbury and Salmondsbury hundreds, both in Gloucestershire, totalled six and 177 hides respectively: Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', p. 158. David Roffe has also recently argued that even taking into account differences in resources and landscape, Kent was comparatively lightly assessed compared to neighbouring Sussex and Surrey,

get drawn into circular arguments, by assuming that Staffordshire's hundreds must have been assessed for tax purposes in round numbers of hides at their inception, and then working out how such a system would have operated in practice. Moreover, how far the West Saxon or English kings would have been able to impose such a rigid system of administration, apparently without any reference to pre-existing administrative structures or vested interests in the Staffordshire area, and how far it would have best served their aims to do so, is also open to debate.

Any calculation of Staffordshire's Domesday hidage assessment is also bound to be incomplete. Although hidage totals are recorded for most of the shire's manors, 35 entries in the Staffordshire Domesday folios contain no hidage assessment. Admittedly the total number of 'missing hides' in the shire may not be very large since almost half of the aforementioned entries occur in a long list of so-called 'waste' lands copied out at the end of the king's holdings in Staffordshire.[9] These entries have a conspicuously low 'tax' assessment: none of the ones which are accorded a hidage assessment exceeds one and a quarter hides.[10] The status of manors that are said by Domesday Book to be *wasta* ('waste') is unclear, and there is disagreement over whether the term signifies actual physical devastation of land, or merely the removal of the land in question from the obligations of geld and service, and it could mean both.[11] Nor is it clear whether a manor said to be 'waste' by Domesday Book automatically carried a reduced hidage assessment to take account of its circumstances. Nevertheless, there are occasions when potentially larger hidage totals

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suggesting that these shires were not assessed for tax purposes in a uniform manner: Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, p. 192.

[9] Domesday Book [hereafter DB], f. 246; A. Hawkins & A. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976) [*DB: Staffs.*], 1,33-1,64.

[10] Aston: DB f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,47.

[11] For further discussion: Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 250-56; R. Studd, 'Recorded "Waste" in the Staffordshire Domesday Entry', *Staffordshire Studies*, 12 (2000), pp. 121-33; W.E. Wightman, 'The Significance of "Waste" in the Yorkshire Domesday', *Northern History*, 10 (1975), pp. 55-71.

have been omitted from the Staffordshire folios. A good example of this is the entry for Acton Trussell, which is not described as 'waste'. Here, the Domesday scribe was clearly aware of the omission of Acton's hidage total and made provision for the missing information to be included at a later date – although it never was. He left a space in the part of the entry where hidage totals were usually recorded within the Staffordshire folios, and inserted the letter 'r', meaning *require* (or 'enquire again') in the space to the left of Acton's entry.[12]

The location of the manors to which some Staffordshire Domesday entries relate is also more certain in some cases than others. A very few are unidentified at present, and so should not be included in the hidage assessment calculated for any hundred.[13] Identification can also be difficult on those occasions where several places in the shire share the same name and similar late eleventh-century forms. Since we are rarely able to track the manorial descent of Staffordshire manors from the time of Domesday Book into the better-documented late Middle Ages, identifications usually seem to have been made on the basis of the position of the entry in question within the Domesday text. For instance, there are two entries in the Staffordshire folios relating to places with the modern name 'Wootton', one held by the king (whose Domesday form is *Wodentone*) and the other by the Bishop of Chester in 1086 (with the Domesday form *Wodestone*). The king's land at Wootton is usually identified as Wootton-under-Weaver in North-East Staffordshire, doubtless on the basis that its entry occurs at the head of a list of entries relating to other places in North-East Staffordshire.[14] Similarly, the place named Wootton held by the Bishop of Chester is usually identified as being Wootton near Eccleshall, probably because it was said to

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[12] DB f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,3. See also the entry for Warslow in Earl Roger's lands: DB f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 8,29.
[13] For example, *Monetville*: DB, f. 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 11,68.
[14] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,48.

be a member of Sugnall, also near Eccleshall.[15] Considering that a similar 'geographical logic' can be found in the ordering of much of the Staffordshire Domesday text, the traditional identification of the two 'Woottons' seems reasonable, and has been adopted in this study. Indeed, identifying Domesday entries on the basis of their position within the text and their geographical location is accepted in this thesis, unless there are independent reasons for doubting any individual identification.[16]

Most important, however, is that there are numerous difficulties in reconstructing the layout of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds from the evidence of Domesday Book. This is of crucial importance, because if the hidage assessment attached to each of the shire's hundreds in 1086 is to be calculated accurately, then we need to be certain that at least a large majority of the shire's Domesday entries can be reliably assigned to a particular hundred.

2.3.1 Domesday Book's evidence for the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds

Staffordshire's Domesday folios follow the same format as those of most shires in Great Domesday Book.[17] The folios begin with an account of the shire town, which is followed by a list of the shire's tenants-in-chief. The king appears first in this list, and is followed by the shire's major ecclesiastical landholders, and then its major secular ones.[18] The Staffordshire fief belonging to each tenant-in-chief is then given its own 'chapter' within the text. In most chapters entries are punctuated by hundred rubrics,

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[15] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,20.
[16] For a more detailed discussion the problems in identifying the four entries in the Staffordshire folios which relate to places now called Moreton see Appendix 1.
[17] Domesday Book consists of two volumes: one, known as Great Domesday Book contains information on 31 shires, including Staffordshire; the other, known as Little Domesday Book, contains information on three shires (Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk). For further discussion: Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 36-47.
[18] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, B1-B12.

with the Domesday scribe thereby indicating that the places listed under each hundred heading belonged to the hundred in question in 1086.

Modern published reconstructions of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds bear little resemblance to the hundredal affiliations recorded in Domesday Book. A 'literal' reading of the source would result in a highly convoluted hundredal geography, with the shire's five hundreds being both tortuously interlocked and having very many (often tiny) detached 'islands' surrounded by other hundreds. Yet according to all previous reconstructions of the layout of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds, each one was a coherent and discrete land-unit at that time [see Map 3 in Chapter 1]. This is because the scholars in question have made numerous changes to the hundredal arrangements recorded by Domesday Book, in some places inserting hundred headings not present in the survey itself, in others 'correcting' rubrics that they believe the scribe copied out 'in error'.

We are rarely told why these changes have been made. Indeed, only Frank Thorn has explained the basis of his reconstruction of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds, and alluded to the difficulties this entails, saying, for example, that not 'every estate can be allocated with certainty to a particular hundred.'[19] Nevertheless, the rationale for making changes to the hundredal affiliations recorded by Domesday Book is probably based on three factors. Firstly, in Staffordshire, as in many shires, the hundredal arrangements recorded by Domesday Book differ widely from those that we learn about in later sources. Secondly, the layout of hundreds reconstructed from a 'literal' reading of Domesday Book results in a highly (and, arguably, unrealistically) convoluted administrative landscape. And, thirdly, it has long been

[19] Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 21

established that numerous errors and omissions are present in Domesday Book.[20] Moreover, internal evidence from the Staffordshire Domesday text provides grounds for thinking that hundred headings were sometimes omitted by the scribe. This is because four chapters, those for Westminster Abbey, Burton Abbey, Hugh de Montgomery, and a certain Nigel, contain no hundred headings at all.[21] It is, of course, possible that the Domesday scribe intended all the entries in chapters where there are no hundred rubrics to be covered by the last hundred heading in the text – i.e. one appearing in a preceding chapter. But against this possibility is the fact that most chapters begin with a hundred heading. Indeed, on one occasion in the Staffordshire folios, a Cuttlestone hundred rubric occurs at the start of a chapter even though there is also a Cuttlestone rubric above the last two entries of the preceding chapter (which shows that on this occasion at least the scribe did not intend for hundred affiliations to 'run on' automatically from one chapter to the next, even if the entries at the end of one chapter belonged to the same hundred as did those at the start of the next).[22]

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[20] Although in recent years there has been a growing admiration for the remarkable abilities of Great Domesday Book's main scribe. For discussion of errors and omissions, in Staffordshire and elsewhere: R.W. Eyton, *Domesday Studies: An Analysis and Digest of the Staffordshire Survey* (London: Trubner, 1881), p. 34; Maitland, *Domesday Book*, pp. 13-14; D. Roffe, *Domesday: The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 74 & 76; *idem*, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 41-47; C.F. Slade, 'Introduction to the Staffordshire Domesday', in L.M. Midgley (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Staffordshire Volume IV* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 2; F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in [no named ed.] *The Staffordshire Domesday* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1991), p. 21; *idem* & C. Thorn, 'The Writing of Great Domesday Book', in E. Hallam & D. Bates (eds), *Domesday Book* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), pp. 38, 48-50, 52.

[21] The number of entries concerned, however, are not large: of the four, only Burton Abbey's chapter has more than three entries; it contains ten.

[22] The chapters in question relate to Reginald Balliol and Richard Forester. The fact both are on the same folio lends further weight to the idea that the scribe intended to start each chapter with a hundred rubric (if Balliol's and Forester's chapters had been on separate folios, it could be argued that the scribe only repeated the Cuttlestone rubric because Balliol headed a new folio): DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 13,9-13,10; 14,1. The situation is similar in the shires that neighbour Staffordshire: sometimes the last hundred heading to appear at the end of one chapter occur at the start of the next (implying that the scribe may not have intended headings to run on automatically from one chapter to the next), but some chapters contain no hundred headings at all.

Scholars are therefore presented with two alternatives: either they can accept the information provided by Domesday Book as being accurate, and assume that changes were made to the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds between 1086 and the late Middle Ages;[23] or they can decide that the lack of correlation between the evidence of Domesday Book and that of later sources results from errors in Domesday Book, and so use the layout of shires recorded in later sources to 'correct' the picture presented by Domesday. The second alternative is based on the assumption that later sources reveal the 'true' situation in 1086.[24] All published reconstructions of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds have chosen the second option and are either based entirely on, or make heavy use of, the layout of hundreds recorded in late medieval and modern sources. R.W. Eyton's, for instance, used the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in the nineteenth century as the basis of his reconstruction of the shire's Domesday hundredal geography (because, he said, the geographical extent of Staffordshire's hundreds had remained largely unchanged since that time, although without indicating the evidential basis of his view).[25] Eyton used his reconstructed hundreds to calculate the hidage assessments belonging to each hundred in 1086, and these calculations, we have seen, have served as the basis of subsequent studies of Staffordshire's origins.[26]

After Domesday Book we are not able to map Staffordshire's hundreds until the mid thirteenth century. The main published sources which provide information about the layout of the shire's hundreds are the Record Commission's edition of the

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[23] For example: F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Shropshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986), Note 3.
[24] This point is made explicitly by Thorn, who says 'the scribe's not infrequent errors are of only a few types and easily allowed for, and some restoration of missing headings can be made from the evidence of the text; but a decision sometimes has to be made to insert a hundred heading above a place from later evidence alone': Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 21.
[25] Eyton, *Domesday Studies*, p. 34.
[26] See Chapter 1.3.3, pp. 27-29.

Hundred Rolls, compiled during the reigns of Henry III (1216-1272) and Edward I (1272-1307), which contains information on Staffordshire dating from the thirty-ninth year of Henry III's reign (1255); the Book of Fees, the relevant sections of which date from the late thirteenth century; Feudal Aids, which provides snapshots of the hundredal geography of the parts of the shire at various points between the late thirteenth century and the start of the fifteenth; and the Lay Subsidy of 1334.[27] We shall see that these sources show that the shire's hundredal geography was relatively stable between the late Middle Ages and the early nineteenth century.[28] Scholars may therefore have reasoned that it is likely that hundredal arrangements had been similarly stable between 1086 and the thirteenth century too. Moreover, whereas in other shires hundred names disappeared and new ones were coined in the late Middle Ages, in Staffordshire we hear about the same five hundreds from 1086 onwards, which may have reinforced the view that the shire's late medieval hundredal landscape is likely to reflect that of 1086.[29]

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[27] Much of the information concerning late medieval hundreds is incidental, mainly being derived from sources in which places are grouped by the hundred to which they belonged, thereby providing us with a snapshot of parts of Staffordshire's hundredal geography at certain points throughout the late Middle Ages. The published Hundred Rolls published by the Record Commission relate to Cuttlestone and Offlow hundreds: *Rotuli Hundredorum temp Hen. III and Edw. I Volume II* (London: The Record Commission, 1818); for information on the dating of the rolls: *Rotuli Hundredorum temp Hen. III and Edw. I Volume I* (London: The Record Commission, 1812). The Hundred Rolls been supplemented two sources: firstly, a tenure roll relating to Offlow hundred published by the eighteenth-century antiquarian Stebbing Shaw, which he dated to *c.* 1255, although without indicating why: S. Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire Volume I* (Stafford: EP Publishing, 1976 [originally published 1798-1801]); and, secondly, a plea roll concerning Seisdon hundred and a partially complete roll relating to Totmonslow hundred published by the William Salt Archaeological Society in 1884: G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Plea Rolls *temp.*Henry III: Suits Affecting Staffordshire Tenants and Abstracted into English', *The William Salt Archaeological Society: Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, 4.1 (1883), pp. 1-126. The relevant sections of the Book of Fees date from the late thirteenth century: *Liber Feodorum: The Book of Fees Part II: AD 1242-1293* (London: HMSO, 1923). Most of the relevant sections of the HMSO's edition of Feudal Aids date from the late thirteenth century to early fourteenth (but occasionally also the early fifteenth): *Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids Volume V: Stafford-Worcester* (London: HMSO, 1908). A feudal aid was a payment a lord could demand of a vassal on certain specific occasions. The Lay Subsidy of 1334 is the most comprehensive of our sources relating to Staffordshire's late medieval hundredal affiliations: R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[28] Thorn, 'Hundreds & Wapentakes', p. 27.

[29] C.F. Slade, for instance, has said that 'the hundreds of Staffordshire differ from those of other midland counties not only in their persistence but also in their size': Slade, Introduction', p. 2.

Some scholars have used internal evidence from Domesday Book to aid in their reconstructions of Staffordshire's hundreds, but doing so has proved to be difficult. In some shires, hundreds appear in a set order in most or all of the shire's chapters. In Buckinghamshire, for example, all the chapters except that for the king and one other appear to have been arranged in the same order of hundreds.[30] Unfortunately there is no such straightforward ordering of hundreds in the Staffordshire folios.[31] Alternatively, Frank Thorn has suggested that 'errors' within Domesday Book can be detected by utilising those places that are named in more than one Domesday entry. He argues, for example, that the Cuttlestone rubric placed at the head of the aforementioned list of king's waste manors is incorrect, and should be replaced with a Pirehill heading. This is on the basis that four of the places in this list – Milwich, Hilderstone, Cotwaldon and Aston – are named in two or more Domesday entries: one listed in the king's 'waste' lands under a Cuttlestone rubric, and the other(s) in a different chapter, but always listed under a Pirehill rubric.[32] The actual late eleventh-century landholding situation at these places is unclear from the Domesday text, and so we do not know whether the king's holdings relate to the same four pieces of land that appear elsewhere in the Staffordshire folios, or distinct land-units within, arguably, the same vill. But whatever the situation at these four places, Thorn feels that because they – along with all the other entries that occur under a

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[30] P.H. Sawyer, 'The "Original Returns" and Domesday Book', *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), pp. 179-80.

[31] Curiously, Sawyer saw a similar pattern in the Staffordshire folios: *ibid.*, p. 181. This, however, is not the case, either with a 'literal' reading of Domesday Book, or when using late medieval evidence to 'correct' mistakes made by the main scribe. Conversely, Frank Thorn argues that there is no such ordering in Staffordshire: Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 23.

[32] Milwich: DB, ff. 246 & 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,41 & 11,30. Hilderstone: DB, ff. 246 & 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), 1,44 & 11,27. Cotwaldon: DB, ff. 246 & 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,45 & 8,21. For the entries identified as being Aston, near Stone: DB, ff. 246, 248-49; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB:* Staffs., 1,47, 11,9 & 11,23.

Cuttlestone rubric in the king's 'waste' holdings – were later in Pirehill hundred, they should be assigned to Pirehill rubric instead.[33]

There are, however, two problems with this approach. Firstly, we know from the evidence of other shires that it was not unusual for a vill to be divided between hundreds, and so it is possible that these places really were divided between Cuttlestone and Pirehill hundreds in 1086;[34] and, secondly, if the entries relate to different vills with the same name, then, once again, it is possible that these places really were divided between Cuttlestone and Pirehill hundreds in 1086. Moreover, the frequency of such 'mistakes' in the Staffordshire Domesday folios begs the question of why the main scribe was relatively careless in assigning manors to hundreds in this shire, or why his information relating to Staffordshire was apparently highly deficient.

To sum up so far, when mapping Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds scholars have prioritised the layout of hundreds recorded in mid thirteenth-century and later sources over the hundredal arrangements recorded in Domesday Book, on the assumption that later sources reveal the 'true' picture in 1086. We therefore need to consider how likely it is that later sources will reflect the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086.

2.3.2 Staffordshire's hundreds in the late Middle Ages

We know that the layout of hundreds in some shires appears to have been subject to changes in the late medieval period and afterwards. In Shropshire, for example, Frank and Caroline Thorn have noted that the shire's late medieval pattern of hundreds was gradually altered by the creation of the liberties of Wenlock, Shrewsbury and Cleobury Mortimer at some point between 1086 and the thirteenth and fourteenth

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[33] Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 23 & n. 14.
[34] For example: *idem* & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Worcestershire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982), Appendix. I.

centuries.[35] It will also be seen in Chapter 4 that a block of land held by the Montgomery family in 1086 was later transferred to Shropshire, probably by 1102. While this block of land admittedly contained only eight manors, four certainly in Staffordshire and four either in that shire or in Warwickshire, some changes to hundredal arrangements must have occurred as a result of this transfer.[36] If the layout of hundreds could be fluid elsewhere in the late Middle Ages, we need to keep in mind the possibility that changes occurred in Staffordshire between 1086 and the thirteenth century.

The hundredal affiliations recorded in thirteenth-century and later sources for Staffordshire are, on the whole, consistent. That is to say, there are very many occasions in the shire when a manor's hundredal affiliation can easily be tracked between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries, and be shown to have remained unchanged.[37] A particularly good example is Alrewas, located near to Lichfield in South-East Staffordshire. In 1086 Alrewas was held by the king, and its Domesday entry is clearly associated with a heading for Offlow hundred.[38] Alrewas is subsequently recorded as being within Offlow hundred on a further six occasions: once in the Hundred Rolls (dating from 1255); once more in Tenure Rolls relating to Offlow hundred published by the eighteenth-century antiquarian Stebbing Shaw (dating to *c.* 1255); three times in Feudal Aids (in 1284-85, 1316 and 1401-02 respectively); and in another source, the Nomina Villarum (a survey of vills and boroughs grouped according to hundred which was compiled in 1316 and was also partially published by Stebbing Shaw).[39] It was still part of Offlow hundred in 1834.[40]

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[35] Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, Note 3.
[36] See Chapter 4.2, pp. 99-102.
[37] The evidence upon which this statement is based is set out in Appendix 2.
[38] The Offlow rubric appears on the first line of Alrewas's entry, after the scribe has recorded that Earl Ælfgar held the manor in 1066: DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,11.
[39] *Rotuli Hundredorum II*, p. 116; *Feudal Aids* pp. 8, 14 & 18; Shaw, *The History*, pp. xvii & xxxi.

Moreover, in Domesday Book and afterwards the manor's name is always recorded as 'Alrewas' – derived from Old English *alor* + *wæsse*, meaning 'alluvial land with alder-trees'. Consequently there can be no doubt that all six late medieval references relate to the same place.[41] Yet it is rare that we have such comprehensive information, and so many decisions regarding late medieval hundred affiliations have to be made on the basis of only one or two such references. Indeed, over a century and a half separates the completion of the Domesday survey and the earliest of our late medieval sources (1255). This is certainly enough time for changes to have been made to Staffordshire's hundredal landscape.

It is also possible to provide two examples which suggest that the boundaries of Staffordshire's late medieval hundreds were sometimes more fluid than they first appear to be. The first example relates to Brocton and Bednall, situated around three miles south-west of Stafford, which were held by the Bishop of Chester in 1086. The Domesday entry for Brocton and Bednall appears directly underneath a Pirehill rubric, which was copied out at the end of the preceding entry, for Acton Trussell. The layout of the text is summarised in Table 2. Since a small gap separates the end of Acton Trussell's entry and the Pirehill rubric, it seems likely that the Domesday scribe did not intend to assign Acton to Pirehill hundred, but only those entries which followed the Pirehill rubric (although since the rubric is not copied out on a separate line we cannot discount the possibility that he had intended to include Acton in Pirehill hundred too).

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[40] W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1834), pp. 300 & 302.

[41] E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 4th edn, 1960), p. 7; D. Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood: David Horovitz, 2005), pp. 83-84; V. Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 10. Ekwall gives the meaning 'Alder swamp'.

Table 2: The first five entries in the Bishop of Chester's chapter within the Staffordshire Domesday folios[42]

Domesday form	Modern form
TERRA EP'I DE CESTRE IN COLVESTAN HD'	Land of the Bishop of Chester. In Cuttlestone Hundred
Brevde	Brewood
Bercheswic (*Waltone*)	Baswich (and Walton-on-the-Hill, said to pertain to Baswich)
Actone IN PEREHOLLE HUND'	Acton Trussell In Pirehill Hundred
Broctone 7 Bedehala	Brocton and Bednall
Haiwode	Great Haywood

Nevertheless, commentators on Staffordshire's Domesday folios have unanimously agreed that the Pirehill heading should have been copied out after the entry for Brocton and Bednall, and before that for Great Haywood, with Brocton and Bednall therefore being assigned to Cuttlestone hundred in 1086.[43] This is probably because Great Haywood was part of Pirehill hundred in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries,[44] and both Brocton and Bednall were in Cuttlestone hundred by 1334.[45] Scholars have presumably therefore reasoned that the scribe simply copied out the hundred heading in the wrong place, or that he inserted the Pirehill heading at the end of Acton's entry because there was insufficient space to do so between those for Brocton and Great Haywood – because it is thought that rubrics were added after the entries in question had been copied out (either as part of the main campaign of writing on this folio, or as part of a new campaign, undertaken once he had finished copying out all the entries).[46] Yet while in 1334 Brocton and Bednall were considered to be in Cuttlestone hundred, half a century before this, in 1284-85, they were assigned to

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[42] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,1-2,5.
[43] Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,5; Slade, 'Introduction', p. 41; Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 24.
[44] *Feudal Aids*, pp. 8 & 15; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 277. See Appendix 2.
[45] Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 281.
[46] Since hundred names were copied out in the same colour as entries and there is no distinguishable difference in the scribe's hand between the entries for Acton and Brocton and the hundred heading (which might have indicated a different campaign of writing) either possibility is feasible. The red vermillion which underlines hundred and chapter headings and the names of manors in Staffordshire was probably added afterwards. For the layout of the text on this folio: *The Staffordshire Domesday* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1991). For further discussion of scribal practices: Roffe, *Decoding Domesday*, pp. 41-45; Thorn & Thorn, 'The Writing'.

Pirehill hundred, i.e. just as they were in Domesday Book.[47] It is therefore possible that Brocton and Bednall really were in Pirehill hundred in 1086, and were still considered to be part of that hundred some two centuries later, but had been transferred to Cuttlestone hundred by 1334, where they were to remain until the early nineteenth century.[48] The information upon which these statements are based is set out in Appendix 2.

This hypothesis is, however, complicated by a number of issues. Domesday Book informs us that Brocton and Bednall belonged to Baswich, which is clearly assigned to Cuttlestone hundred in the Domesday text, since it is separated from a Cuttlestone rubric by just one entry, that for Brewood.[49] We might therefore have expected Brocton and Bednall also to be associated with Cuttlestone hundred in 1086 – although equally there is no reason to believe that both Baswich and its dependencies must all have been part of the same hundred at that time. Matters are further complicated by the late medieval hundredal affiliation of Acton Trussell, whose position in the Domesday text suggests that it too may have been linked to Baswich in 1086, since it was sandwiched between Walton and Brocton, which are explicitly said to be so.[50] Like Brocton and Bednall, Acton Trussell was considered to be part of Pirehill hundred in 1284-85 but was in Cuttlestone hundred by 1334.[51] Thus, it is possible that, in spite of the aforementioned space left between the end of Acton's entry and the Pirehill rubric, which implies that the scribe did not intend to assign Acton to that hundred, Acton Trussell either was part of Pirehill hundred in

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[47] *Feudal Aids*, p. 6.
[48] White, *History*, pp. 474-75.
[49] See Table 2; DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,2.
[50] Acton Trussell, Brocton and Bednall were also ecclesiastically subordinate to Baswich in the late Middle Ages: chapter 7.5.5, pp. 289-90.
[51] *Feudal Aids*, p. 6; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 281.

1086, or for some reason had been transferred from Cuttlestone to Pirehill hundred by the late thirteenth century but was returned to Cuttlestone by 1334.

It has unfortunately only been possible to find one reference to Baswich's late medieval hundredal association, in the Hundred Rolls, which assign Baswich and unnamed members to Cuttlestone hundred in 1255.[52] If Brocton and Bednall were the unnamed members to which the Hundred Rolls allude, this would complicate their position yet further. It would suggest that they were in Cuttlestone hundred in 1255, were transferred to Pirehill hundred by 1284-85, and then back to Cuttlestone by 1334. But we do not know that Brocton and Bednall were the members of Baswich referred to in the Hundred Rolls. Indeed, the number of variables involved makes their status (and, arguably, that of Acton Trussell too) uncertain until the time of the Lay Subsidy. All we can say for sure is that Brocton and Bednall were assigned to Pirehill hundred in 1086 and once again in 1284-85, but were assigned to Cuttlestone hundred in 1334, which raises the possibility that prioritising their fourteenth-century and later hundredal affiliation over that of Domesday Book distorts, rather than corrects, our picture of Staffordshire's hundreds at the end of the eleventh century.

We find a similarly complex situation at Rugeley, which appears in a long list of entries in the king's chapter which are assigned to Offlow hundred. Rugeley was associated with Offlow hundred once again in the mid twelfth century, but was said to be in Cuttlestone hundred in 1316 and afterwards.[53] This provides grounds for thinking that Rugeley was part of Offlow hundred in 1086 but was transferred to Cuttlestone hundred by the early fourteenth century. But the position of Rugeley's entry within the Domesday text complicates matters. It occurs around half way

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[52] *Rotuli Hundredorum II*, p. 114.
[53] For Offlow hundred: DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1;22; Shaw, *The History*, p. xviii. For Cuttlestone hundred: *Feudal Aids*, p. 17; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 281; White, *History*, p. 508.

through of a list of 22 entries which appear under an Offlow rubric, but were divided between each of the shire's hundreds in the thirteenth century and afterwards. Consequently, the possibility that numerous hundred headings were omitted from this list cannot be ignored, which means that we cannot be confident that no changes in hundredal affiliations had occurred between the Offlow rubric and the entry for Rugeley, and therefore that Rugeley really was part of Offlow hundred in 1086. Moreover, there is no discernible pattern to the geographical spread or later hundredal affiliations of the entries in question, which might have helped determine which of the places in question were part of Offlow hundred in 1086.[54]

The problems that confront attempts to reconstruct Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds can thus be summarised as follows. There are good reasons for thinking that Domesday Book does not provide full, and fully accurate, information about the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086. This is because, firstly, the fact that some chapters in the Staffordshire Domesday folios contain no hundred rubrics at all suggests that rubrics may have been omitted from the text, and, secondly, a 'literal' reading of Domesday Book results in an extremely complex and convoluted hundredal geography for the shire. But since we lack confidence in the layout of late eleventh-century hundreds presented by Domesday Book, there is no reliable way of telling how far the shire's hundredal geography of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries mirrors that of 1086. It is therefore possible that any

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[54] According to later sources the 22 entries in question would have been divided between Staffordshire's hundreds in the following way: Offlow, Offlow, Pirehill, Pirehill, Pirehill, Pirehill, Totmonslow, Totmonslow, Totmonslow, Offlow, Totmonslow, Cuttlestone, Totmonslow, Cuttlestone, Cuttlestone, Offlow, Seisdon, Seisdon, Offlow, Offlow, Offlow, Offlow: DB, f. 246, Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,11-1,32. There is a similarly complex situation at Cannock, which has two Domesday entries that are listed under Offlow and Seisdon hundred headings respectively (the former entry occurring in the same list as that for Rugeley). Cannock was associated with Cuttlestone hundred in 1255, with Offlow hundred in *c.* 1255, and was assigned to Cuttlestone hundred in 1316 and thereafter: DB, ff. 246 & 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,25 & 17,5; *Rotuli Hundredorum II*, p. 114; Shaw, *The History*, p. xviii; *Feudal Aids*, p. 17; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 281; White, *History*, p. 484.

reconstruction of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds based on later sources alone will merely map the layout of hundreds as they were in the thirteenth century and afterwards, rather than as they were at the time of Domesday Book. Consequently, we are not entitled to assume that the Domesday scribe simply 'got it wrong' whenever a place is assigned to a different hundred in Domesday Book from in later sources.

The examples of Brocton and Bednall also provide positive grounds for thinking that inconsistencies between the hundredal affiliations recorded by Domesday Book and in later sources are not automatically the result of deficiencies in Domesday's information, and that some changes may have been made to the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds between 1086 and the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Having said that, no positive evidence of a large-scale reorganisation of Staffordshire's hundreds has come to light. Nor are there signs of such a 'programme' of changes to local administration throughout England in the late Middle Ages, and so if Staffordshire's hundredal geography had been tidied up between 1086 and the thirteenth century, it is unknown whether this would have been the result of a centrally-driven policy to tidy up hundredal arrangements throughout England, or the result of changes made to Staffordshire alone.[55]

The inconsistencies between the evidence of Domesday Book and that of later sources are, unfortunately, so great that we may never be able to reconstruct Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds fully.[56] Nevertheless, it is possible to produce a map that shows the location of places for late eleventh-century hundredal affiliation is not open to doubt, because they are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources.

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[55] To my knowledge the possibility of such a centrally-driven programme has not been theorised on in print.

[56] A similar point is made by Frank Thorn: Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 21.

2.4 Towards a reconstruction of Staffordshire's Domesday Hundreds

Table 5 shows those places which are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources. The table distinguishes between entries which as well as being associated with the same hundred in Domesday Book and later sources are not separated from a hundred rubric in the Domesday text by any 'problem' entries, and those which are separated from a hundred heading by one or more 'problem' entries. Entries in the former category are listed as certainly belonging to the hundred to which they are assigned by Domesday Book, and those in the latter as probably having done so.

The complexities in interpreting the evidence of Domesday Book and later sources are such that it is not possible to apply a 'one size fits all' approach to interpreting Domesday Book's evidence for Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds. Decisions regarding whether to include or exclude an entry have to be made on the basis of the hundredal affiliations in Domesday Book and later sources, and on the position of the entry in question within the Domesday text. Table 5 nevertheless excludes the following categories of entries: firstly, those places which are assigned to one hundred in Domesday Book but another in later sources; secondly, the Domesday chapters for Westminster Abbey, Burton Abbey, Hugh de Montgomery and Nigel, which contain no hundred headings at all (and so there is no Domesday hundredal affiliation to compare against later evidence);[57] thirdly, a large part of the Canons of Wolverhampton's chapter, because it contains no hundred heading until two thirds of the way through its entries; and, fourthly, a group of eight manors in South-West Staffordshire that were held by the Montgomery family in 1086, but which, as we

[57] This assumes that the Domesday scribe did not intend the last rubric in the chapter preceding that for Westminster Abbey to cover all the entries until the next rubric in the text, which appears at the start of the chapter for St Remy's church (the one that follows that for Burton Abbey). This, however, seems to be a reasonable assumption because we have seen that there is a hundred heading at the start of most chapters: above, p. 42.

shall see, were later transferred to Shropshire (probably by 1102). As these manors were part of Shropshire in the late Middle Ages their late medieval hundredal affiliation cannot be compared to that of Domesday Book.[58] Four entries in the king's chapter (Barton-under-Needwood, Clifton Campville, Drayton Bassett and Elford), are also excluded from Table 5 even though they assigned to the Offlow hundred in Domesday Book and in later sources.[59] This is because they are part of the aforementioned list of 22 entries which are assigned to Offlow hundred by Domesday Book but which were divided between each of the shire's hundreds in the late Middle Ages.[60]

Not all the places named in Domesday Book are likewise named in late medieval sources and so it is not always possible to track their hundredal affiliations in the late Middle Ages. In such cases the evidence of Domesday Book has been compared against the situation in the early nineteenth century. It is admittedly an assumption that the early nineteenth-century hundredal affiliations of the places in question are a reliable guide to their affiliations in the late Middle Ages, albeit a reasonable one in view of the very high continuity that can usually be demonstrated between hundredal affiliations between the thirteenth and early nineteenth centuies. The data upon which this statement is based is set out in Appendix 2.

The methodological basis for decisions to include or exclude problematic Domesday entries in Table 5 can be illustrated with three examples.

Some manors have two or more Domesday entries. While occasionally all the entries concerned are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later

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[58] See Chapter 4.3, pp. 99-102.
[59] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*,1,20 (Barton-under-Needwood), 1,26 (Elford), 1,29 (Clifton Campville), & 1,30 (Drayton Bassett).
[60] Above, pp. 51-52. Only the first two entries in the list, for Alrewas and King's Bromley, are included in Table 5. This is because they fall directly under an Offlow rubric, were later part of that hundred and occur within the Domesday text before the first entry in the list that was part of a different hundred in the thirteenth century and afterwards (Sandon).

sources, and so we have no reason to doubt their late eleventh-century hundredal affiliation, often the situation is more complicated. An example is Milwich, which we have seen appears twice in Domesday Book, firstly as part of the aforementioned group of 'waste' lands which Domesday lists under a Cuttlestone rubric, and secondly as part of Robert of Stafford's holdings, and listed under a Pirehill rubric.[61]

Whatever the landholding situation at Milwich in 1086, in the early fourteenth century the manor known as Milwich seems to have been a single land-unit which was firmly within Pirehill hundred.[62] Because scholars have prioritised later evidence over that of Domesday Book, they usually argue that the Domesday scribe was wrong to assign the king's land at Milwich to Cuttlestone hundred, and believe instead that both entries relate to land that was in Pirehill hundred in 1086. But we have already seen that we are not entitled to assume that the Domesday scribe simply 'got it wrong' whenever a manor is assigned to a different hundred in later sources. Furthermore, since we also know that vills were sometimes divided between hundreds in 1086, there is no reason why Milwich should not have been split between Cuttlestone and Pirehill hundreds in the late eleventh century, just as Domesday Book implies, later being unified in Pirehill.[63] Thus, since one entry for Milwich is assigned to Pirehill hundred in Domesday Book and Milwich also belonged to that hundred in the late Middle Ages, we can be fairly certain that Robert of Stafford's land there was in Pirehill hundred in 1086 – although we cannot be confident about the hundredal affiliation of the king's land at Milwich. On this basis, Milwich has been included in this reconstruction of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds, listed in Table 5 as only probably belonging to Pirehill hundred, rather than certainly having done so.

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[61] DB, ff. 246 & 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,41 & 11,30.
[62] *Feudal Aids*, p. 12; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 278.
[63] Above, p. 46.

Another problem occurs when there is a group of Domesday entries which are mainly assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in late medieval sources, but contain one or more problem entries. For example, at the end of Robert of Stafford's chapter are 18 entries which Domesday Book lists under a Cuttlestone rubric. Table 3 shows the ordering of the entries.

Table 3: Some entries in Robert of Stafford's chapter listed under a Cuttlestone hundred rubric[64]

Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.* reference	**Domesday form**	**Modern name**
11,51	*ii hid' IN CVDVLVESTAN HD'*	2 hides in Cuttlestone hundred[65]
11,52	*Haltone*	Haughton
11,53	*Levintone*	Loynton
11,54	*Wilbrestone*	Wilbrighton
11,55	*Brvnitone*	Brineton
11,56	*Brumhelle*	Blymhill
11,57	*Estreton*	Stretton
11,58	*Etone*	Water Eaton
11,59	*Gragelie*	Gailey
11,60	*Orretone*	Otherton
11,61	*Sardone*	Great Saredon
11,62	*Cove*	Coven
11,63	*Copehale*	Coppenhall
11,64	*Servesed*	Shareshill
11,65	*Eitone*	Church Eaton
11,66	*Levehale*	Levedale
11,67	*Ricarderscote*	Rickerscote
11,68	*Monetville*	*Monetville*

Apart from the unnamed first entry and those for *Monetville* and Loynton, all of these entries are known to have been in Cuttlestone hundred in the late Middle Ages or afterwards. The first entry and *Monetville* are unidentified and so these have been excluded from Table 5. The entry for Loynton, however, is more problematic because that place was certainly part of Pirehill hundred by the fourteenth century.[66]

It could be argued that all the entries in the group which follow Loynton should be excluded from the reconstruction of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds in

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[64] DB, f. 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 11,52-11,68.
[65] The name of the place at which Robert held two hides is omitted from the Domesday text.
[66] Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 279.

Table 5. This is because we cannot be certain whether Loynton belonged to Cuttlestone hundred in 1086 (as Domesday Book says) or to Pirehill hundred (as it did in the late Middle Ages). If Loynton belonged to Pirehill hundred in 1086 (that is, if the Domesday scribe neglected to insert a Pirehill rubric above its entry), then so too, it could be argued, might all the entries which follow Loynton until we reach the next hundred heading in the Domesday text – unless the scribe omitted to insert a Cuttlestone rubric below Loynton's entry too. But we have no independent grounds for believing that the 14 manors which follow Loynton were part of Pirehill hundred in 1086, and all were part of Cuttlestone hundred in the thirteenth century and afterwards.[67] Furthermore, had there been a gap in the Domesday text above Loynton's entry, this might have indicated that the scribe had intended to insert a new hundred heading there, but the entry for Loynton follows on without interruption from the preceding one (Haughton). On this basis, the 14 entries that follow Loynton are included in the reconstruction of Domesday hundreds, listed in Table 5 as probably, rather than certainly, belonging to Cuttlestone hundred in 1086. Loynton, however, has been excluded: it may well have been part of Cuttlestone hundred in 1086 but was in Pirehill by the fourteenth century. Indeed, Loynton Hall was later adjacent to the boundary between Cuttlestone and Pirehill hundreds and was transferred from Pirehill to Cuttlestone hundred in or shortly after 1834.[68]

We find another complex situation at the end of the Bishop of Chester's chapter, set out in the table below.

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[67] Although it should be noted that there is another entry for a place called Saredon [see Table 3, 11,61] in the Staffordshire Domesday folios. This place, usually identified as Little Saredon, and was held by Udi in 1086, appears under a Seisdon rubric, and so Saredon, like Milwich, may have been divided between hundreds at the time: DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 17,2.

[68] White, *History*, p. 501. It is also possible that the Domesday scribe included Loynton amongst Robert's holdings in Cuttlestone hundred in error. Frank Thorn, however, suggests that it was perhaps transferred to Pirehill hundred in 1333, although without indicating why: Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 27, n. 16.

Table 4: The final seven entries in the Bishop of Chester's Domesday chapter[69]

Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.* reference	**Domesday manor**	**Late medieval hundred**
-	In OFFLOW Hundred	
2,16	Lichfield (with the members of Packington, Hammerwich, Stytchbrook, Norton Canes and Wyrley, Rowley)	Offlow
2,17	Coley	Pirehill
2,18	Moreton	Pirehill?[70]
2,19	Drointon	Pirehill
2,20	Sugnall (with the members of Gerrard's Bromley, Podmore, Tunstall, Swynchurch, Walton, Adbaston, Wootton, Knighton)	Pirehill
-	(space)	
2,21	Seighford (with Aston and Doxey, Bridgeford, Coton Clanford)	Pirehill
2,22	Lichfield (with the members of Packington, Tamhorn, Handsacre, Hints, Yoxall, Pipe Ridware, Weeford, *Burouestone*, *Litelbech*, Freeford, *Timmor*, Harborne, Smethwick, Tipton)	Offlow

Although Domesday Book assigns all the manors in question to Offlow hundred, scholars usually argue that the later picture shows that two hundred headings are missing from this section of text, and the scribe should have inserted a Pirehill rubric above the entry for Coley and an Offlow rubric above the second entry for Lichfield. In the reconstruction of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds that follows, the places appearing in Lichfield's first entry[71] are listed in Table 5 as certainly in Offlow hundred in 1086, because that entry appears directly under an Offlow rubric and all the places mentioned within it were later part of Offlow hundred; the entries relating to places that were later in Pirehill hundred are excluded; and the places which appear in Lichfield's second entry are listed as probably belonging to Offlow hundred in 1086, because they are assigned to Offlow hundred in Domesday Book and were later part of that hundred, but are separated from the Offlow rubric by the group of manors

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[69] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,16-2,22.
[70] Distinguishing between the three manors called Moreton in the Staffordshire Domesday is difficult: Appendix 1; above, n. 16.
[71] Except Packington, because it is mentioned again in Lichfield's second entry.

which belonged to Pirehill hundred in the thirteenth century and afterwards. What, if anything, the Domesday scribe had intended to write in the space between the entries for Sugnall and Seighford remains unclear.[72]

It could be argued that this methodology places too much emphasis on later sources, and limits the use made of Domesday evidence. It is true that any potential 'untidiness' in Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundredal geography will be lost by this approach because the shire's hundreds were all discrete land-units in the late Middle Ages. This situation, however, stems directly from the limitations of Domesday Book's evidence relating to Staffordshire, and cannot be avoided. Yet if new light is to be thrown on the origins of the shire's hundreds, we need to know which manors can reliably be assigned to a particular hundred in 1086 – even if this is at the expense of a fuller map of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds.

2.5 Conclusions

It is clear from the table below that it is not possible to produce a complete map of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds: only around half of Staffordshire's Domesday entries can be assigned to a hundred, and many of these are separated from their hundred rubrics by 'problem' entries. Nevertheless, there is a tendency for convergence between the reconstructed layout of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds and the shire's hundredal geography in the thirteenth century and afterwards

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[72] Coley, Moreton, Drointon and Sugnall could theoretically have been detached parts of Offlow hundred in 1086. A gap may, therefore, have been included above Seighford because that manor was part of another hundred at the time. In this case, however, we would need to explain why there is no similar space for a hundred heading above Lichfield's second entry [2,22]. Alternatively, perhaps, as Frank Thorn says, 'an Offlow head above the second entry for Lichfield on f. 247 can be taken as read since it is essentially a continuation of the first', since Domesday Book records in Lichfield's second entry that '*am retro descriptus est*' ('it has been described before'): Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', p. 24, n. 4.

Table 5: Places assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources[73]

Domesday Hundred certain [Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.* reference]	**Domesday Hundred probable [Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.* reference]**
Cuttlestone Baswich [2,2] Beighterton [14,1] Brewood [2,1] Brockton Grange [14,1] Essington [12,22] Haughton [1,52] Huntington [13,10] Knightley [8,6] Rodbaston [13,9] Sheriff Hales [8,5] Shushions [17,20] Walton-on-the-Hill [2,2] Weston-under-Lizard [14,1]	Blymhill [11,56] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334) Brineton [11,55] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334) Chillington [*DB: Warwicks*, 28,19] (appears directly under a Cuttlestone hundred rubric but in the Warwickshire Domesday folios) Church Eaton [11,65] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334, and Great Saredon) Coppenhall [11,63] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton and Great Saredon) Coven [11,62] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton and Great Saredon) Gailey [11,59] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334) Gnosall [7,18] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Penkridge) Lapley [*DB: Northants.*, 16,1] (appears directly under a Cuttlestone hundred rubric but in the Northamptonshire Domesday folios) Levedale [11,66] separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton and Great Saredon) Marston (near Church Eaton) [*DB: Northants.*, 16,2] (listed under a Cuttlestone rubric but in the Northamptonshire Domesday folios) Moreton (near Gnosall) [8,7] (see Appendix 1) Norbury [8,10] (appears in a list of manors under a Cuttlestone rubric although is separated from the main body of the list by Moreton (see Appendix 1) and Marston, which is usually identified as Marston in Stafford (later in Pirehill hundred), perhaps because 18 Stafford burgesses are said to belong to it, but could equally be Marston six miles west of Penkridge (later in Cuttlestone hundred)) High Onn [8,8] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Moreton (see Appendix 1)) Otherton [11,60] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334) Penkridge [1,7, 7,17] (the second entry appears directly under a Cuttlestone hundred rubric and Penkridge was part of that hundred in the late Middle Ages, but the first is listed under a Seisdon rubric) Rickerscote [11,67] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton and Great Saredon)

[73] The data on which this table is based is set out in Appendix 2.

	Great Saredon [11,61] (the entry for Little Saredon is listed under a Seisdon rubric) Shareshill [11,64] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton and Great Saredon) Stretton [11,57] (separated from that rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334) Walton Grange [8,11] (like Norbury appears in a list of manors under a Cuttlestone rubric although is separated from the main body of the list by Moreton Marston, which is usually identified as Marston in Stafford (later in Pirehill hundred), perhaps because 18 Stafford burgesses are said to belong to it, but could equally be Marston six miles west of Penkridge (later in Cuttlestone hundred)) Water Eaton (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334) Wilbrighton [11,54] (separated from Cuttlestone rubric by Loynton, which was part of Pirehill hundred in 1334)
Offlow Agardsley [10,4] Aldridge [12,24] Alrewas [1,11] Great Barr[74] [12,25 & 12,28] Perry Barr [12,27] Bradley [12,23] King's Bromley [1,12] Draycott [10,5] Fauld [10,6] Hammerwich (Lichfield) [2,16] Handsworth [12,29] Marchington [10,4] Norton Canes and Wyrley (Lichfield) [2,16] Rolleston [10,3] Rowley (Lichfield) [2,16] Rushall [12,27] Shenstone [8,32] Stytchbrook (Lichfield) [2,16]	Packington (Lichfield) [2,16, 2,22] (although both entries are listed under an Offlow rubric, the second follows a group of manors that were in Pirehill hundred) Hamstall Ridware [5,2, 8,26, 11,50] (the first entry occurs directly under an Offlow rubric but the second is listed under a Pirehill rubric and the third under a Seisdon one) Tamhorn, Handsacre, Hints, Yoxall, Pipe Ridware, Weeford, Harborne, Smethwick and Tipton [2,22] (members of Lichfield manor which appear under an Offlow rubric although are separated from that rubric by a group of manors that were later in Pirehill hundred)
Pirehill Aspley [2,13] Audley [17,13] Baden Hall (Bishop's Offley) [2,11] Balterley [17,11, 17,12] Betley [17,10] Brockton (Bishop's Offley) [2,11] Broughton [2,12] Chatcull (Bishop's Offley) [2,11] Chapel Chorlton (Bishop's Offley) [2,11] Hill Chorlton (Bishop's Offley) [2,11] Clayton [13,6]	Abbey Hulton and Rushton Grange [11,21] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon) Almington [8,22] (separated from Pirehill rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley, later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively) Ashley [8,25] (separated from Pirehill rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley, later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively, and by Meaford)

[74] Identifying to which place now called Barr Domesday Book refers in its entries for *Barra* [12,25] and *Barre* [12,28] is not straightforward: Chapter 3.3, pp. 74-75. Nevertheless, these entries have been included in Table 5 because both are listed under an Offlow rubric, and Great Barr, Little Barr and Perry Barr are only associated with Offlow hundred in the late Middle Ages.

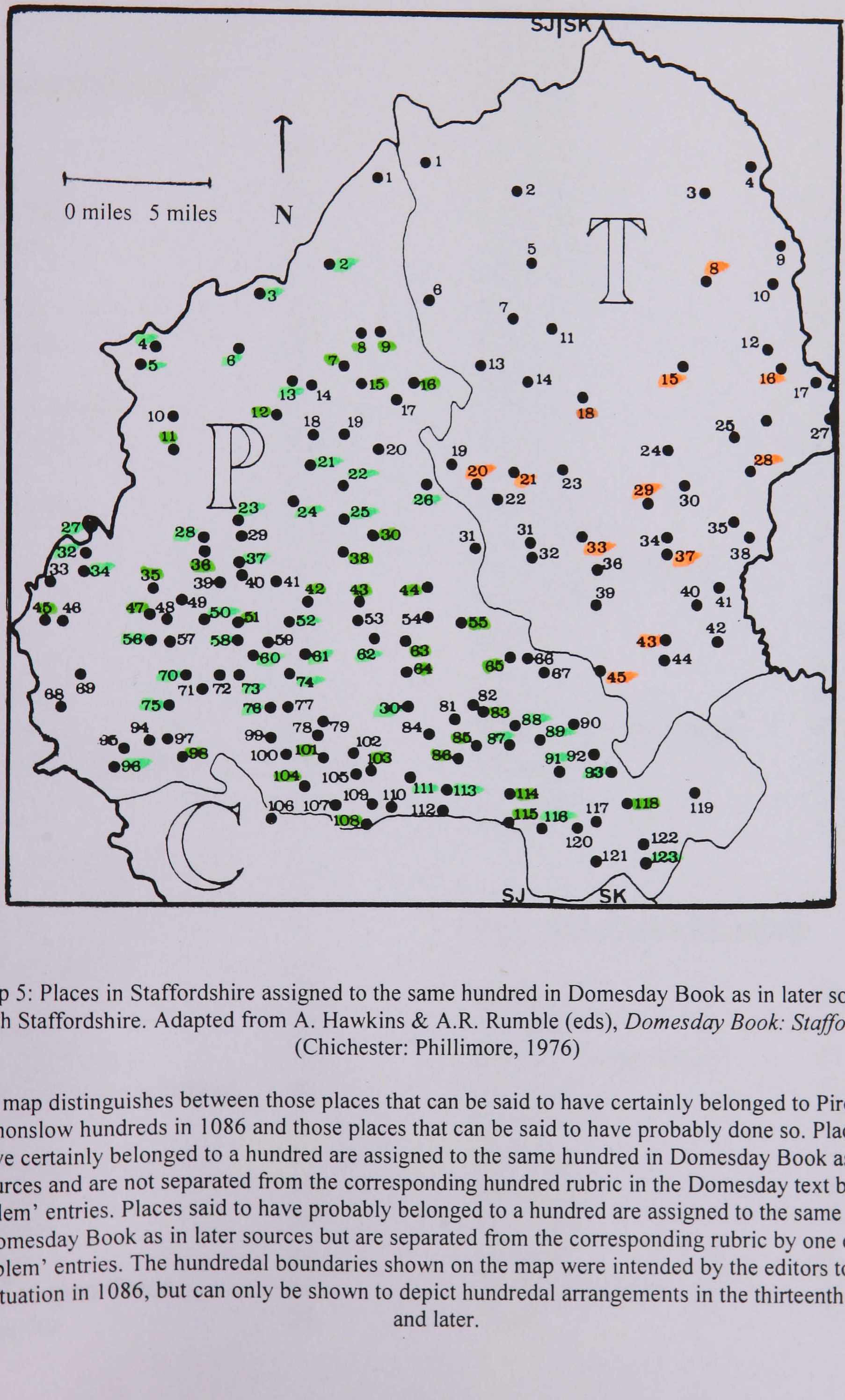
Cold Meece (Bishop's Offley) [2,11]
Colton [8,15, 11,29]
Cotes (Bishop's Offley) [2,11]
Coton [8,14]
Croxton [2,14]
Dimsdale [13,7]
Eccleshall [2,10]
Flashbrook (Bishop's Offley) [2,11]
Gayton and Amerton [8,13]
Hanchurch [13,5]
Hanford [13,4]
Great Haywood [2,5]
Hixon [2,6]
Knighton [17,7]
Mucklestone [17,8]
Newton [14,2]
Normacot [13,3]
Bishop's Offley [2,11]
Slindon (Bishop's Offley) [2,11]
Talke [17,14]
Thursfield [13,1]
Tillington [11,1]
Trentham [1,8]
Walton [11,8]
Weston-upon-Trent [17,15]
Whitmore [13,2]
Winnington [17,9]
Wolseley [2,7]
Yarlet [8,12]

Aston and Stoke-by-Stone [1,47, 11,9, 11,23] (an entry for a manor called Aston [1,47] is listed under a Cuttlestone rubric; the other two entries, are listed under a Pirehill rubric. All places named Aston in Staffordshire were part of Pirehill hundred in the late Middle Ages)
Barlaston [11,24] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon)
Blithfield [8,27] (separated from Pirehill rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley, later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively; Meaford; and an entry for Hamstall Ridware, later in Offlow hundred)
Bradeley [11,28] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston, Sandon and Hilderstone)
Burslem [11,22] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon)
Cooksland [11,26] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon)
Creswell [8,21] (separated from Pirehill rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley, later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively)
Derrington [8,20] (separated from Pirehill rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley, later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively)
Hilderstone [1,44, 11,27] (the first entry is held by the king and listed under a Cuttlestone rubric, the second is held by Robert of Stafford and is listed under a Pirehill rubric (in which hundred Hilderstone fell in the late Middle Ages))
Hopton [11,11] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon)
Ingestre [11,32] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston, Sandon, Hilderstone, Milwich and Tixall)
Knutton [13,8] (listed under a Pirehill rubric and part of that hundred in the late Middle Ages, but the line of its ends with a Cuttlestone rubric, probably intended for the next entry (Rodbaston) but perhaps intended for Knutton too)
Madeley [11,20] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon)
Maer [11,17] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon)
Meaford [5,1, 8,24] (the first entry occurs directly under a Pirehill rubric but the second is separated from its rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley, later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively)
Milwich [1,41, 11,30] (second entry listed under a Pirehill rubric and part of that hundred in the late Middle Ages, but the first entry appears under a Cuttlestone rubric)
Moddershall [8,21] (separated from Pirehill rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley, later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively)
Noton-in-the-Moors [11,19] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon)

	High Offley [11,14] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon) Ranton [11,25] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon) Salt [11,12] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon) Sandon [1,13, 11,10] (the first entry is held by the king and listed under an Offlow rubric, the second is held by Robert of Stafford and is listed under a Pirehill rubric (in which hundred Sandon fell in the late Middle Ages)) Standon and the Rudge [11,15] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon) Swynnerton [11,18] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston and Sandon) Tittensor [11,33] (separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston, Sandon, Hilderstone, Milwich and Tixall) Tixall [8,23, 11,31] (both entries appear under a Pirehill rubric but the first is separated from the rubric by the consecutive entries of Mavesyn Ridware and Loxley (later in Offlow and Totmonslow hundreds respectively), while the second is separated from Pirehill rubric by Aston, Sandon, Hilderstone and Milwich)
Seisdon Amblecote [12,14] Bobbington [11,43] Chasepool [12,3] Codsall [17,1] Enville [12,10] Himley [12,12] Kingswinford [1,1] Morfe [12,2] Oaken [11,45] Orton [12,7] Oxley [12,9] Patshull [11,44] Lower Penn [12,5] Upper Penn [12,6] Sedgley [12,1] Seisdon [12,17] Trysull [12,15] Wombourne [12,8] Wrottesley [11,46]	Bilston [1,4] (listed after Tettenhall) Bushbury [7,3, 12,19] (Bushbury's first entry occurs occurs in the first two thirds of the Canons of Wolverhampton's chapter, which includes no hundred heading; its second is listed under a Seisdon rubric, and Bushbury was in Seisdon hundred in the late Middle Ages) Moseley [12,21] (separated from Seisdon rubric by Bushbury) Pendeford [12,20] (separated from Seisdon rubric by Bushbury) Tettenhall [1,2, 7,5] (the first entry for Tettenhall occurs under a Seisdon rubric but another entry appears in the first two thirds of the Canons of Wolverhampton's chapter, which includes no hundred heading) Wightwick [1,3] (separated from Seisdon rubric by Tettenhall)
Totmonslow Blore [11,40] Bramshall [11, 38] Bradley-in-the-Moors [15,1] Cauldon [11,4] Caverswall [11,36] Dilhorne [11,41] Ellaston [2,15, 11,39] Gratwich [11,35] Grindon [11,3] Madeley Holme [11,37] Tean [11,2]	Kingsley [15,2, 16,2] (the first entry is listed under a Totmonslow rubric, with which Kingsley was associated in the late Middle Ages; the second entry is not associated with any hundred in Domesday Book as the chapter in question has no hundred headings)

(although this is unsurprising considering the methodology adopted). Maps 5 and 6 show those places assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources. It can be seen that there is a strong grouping of Seisdon manors in the south-west of the shire; several groups of Offlow manors in South-East Staffordshire, concentrated around Hanbury, Harborne and Lichfield respectively; a sizeable number of Cuttlestone manors in Central-West Staffordshire; a large number of Pirehill manors spread out over the central-west and north-west of the shire; and, finally, a few Totmonslow manors in North-East Staffordshire. The maps do not, however, attempt to draw precise boundaries between Staffordshire's hundreds. This is because even in those parts of the shire where there are strong groupings of places assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources, there is usually a significant spread of manors whose hundredal affiliations in 1086 are uncertain (i.e. because they are assigned to a different hundred in later sources). We do not know whether these places represent detached sections of other hundreds, or merely are places where Domesday Book's evidence for hundredal arrangements is deficient. Such information would be necessary for precise boundaries to be drawn.

Nevertheless, some general observations can be made about hundredal arrangements in Staffordshire in 1086. In some parts of the shire it has been conspicuously difficult to assign places to a Domesday hundred, and so it is these areas which potentially witnessed the greatest number of changes to the shire's hundredal geography between 1086 and the thirteenth century. The northern half of the area which was know as Totmonslow hundred by the thirteenth century is one such place. The problem in this area is that over a third of the Domesday entries for places later in Totmonslow hundred are listed under a Pirehill rubric, and so we do not know whether, as is often argued, the Domesday scribe should have assigned these



Map 5: Places in Staffordshire assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources: North Staffordshire. Adapted from A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976)

The map distinguishes between those places that can be said to have certainly belonged to Pirehill or Totmonslow hundreds in 1086 and those places that can be said to have probably done so. Places said to have certainly belonged to a hundred are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources and are not separated from the corresponding hundred rubric in the Domesday text by any 'problem' entries. Places said to have probably belonged to a hundred are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources but are separated from the corresponding rubric by one or more 'problem' entries. The hundredal boundaries shown on the map were intended by the editors to depict the situation in 1086, but can only be shown to depict hundredal arrangements in the thirteenth century and later.

Key to Map 5

Pirehill hundred: certain

Pirehill hundred: probable

Totmonslow hundred: certain

Totmonslow hundred: probable

Pirehill hundred: certain

Aspley	58
Audley	6
Baden Hall	74
Balterley	4
Betley	5
Brockton	73
Broughton	56
Chatcull	50
Chapel Chorlton	37
Hill Chorlton	28
Clayton	21
Cold Meece	61
Colton	123
Cotes	52
Coton	113
Croxton	70
Dimsdale	13
Eccleshall	76
Flashbrook	96
Gayton and Amerton	88 & 89
Hanchurch	24
Hanford	22
(Great) Haywood	116
Hixon	91
Knighton	27
Mucklestone	34
Newton	93
Normacot	26
Bishop's Offley	75
Slindon (Bishop's Offley)	60
Talke	3
Thursfield	2
Tillington	111
Trentham	25
Walton	62
Weston-upon-Trent	87
Whitmore	23
Winnington	32
Wolseley	124
Yarlet	80

Pirehill hundred: probable

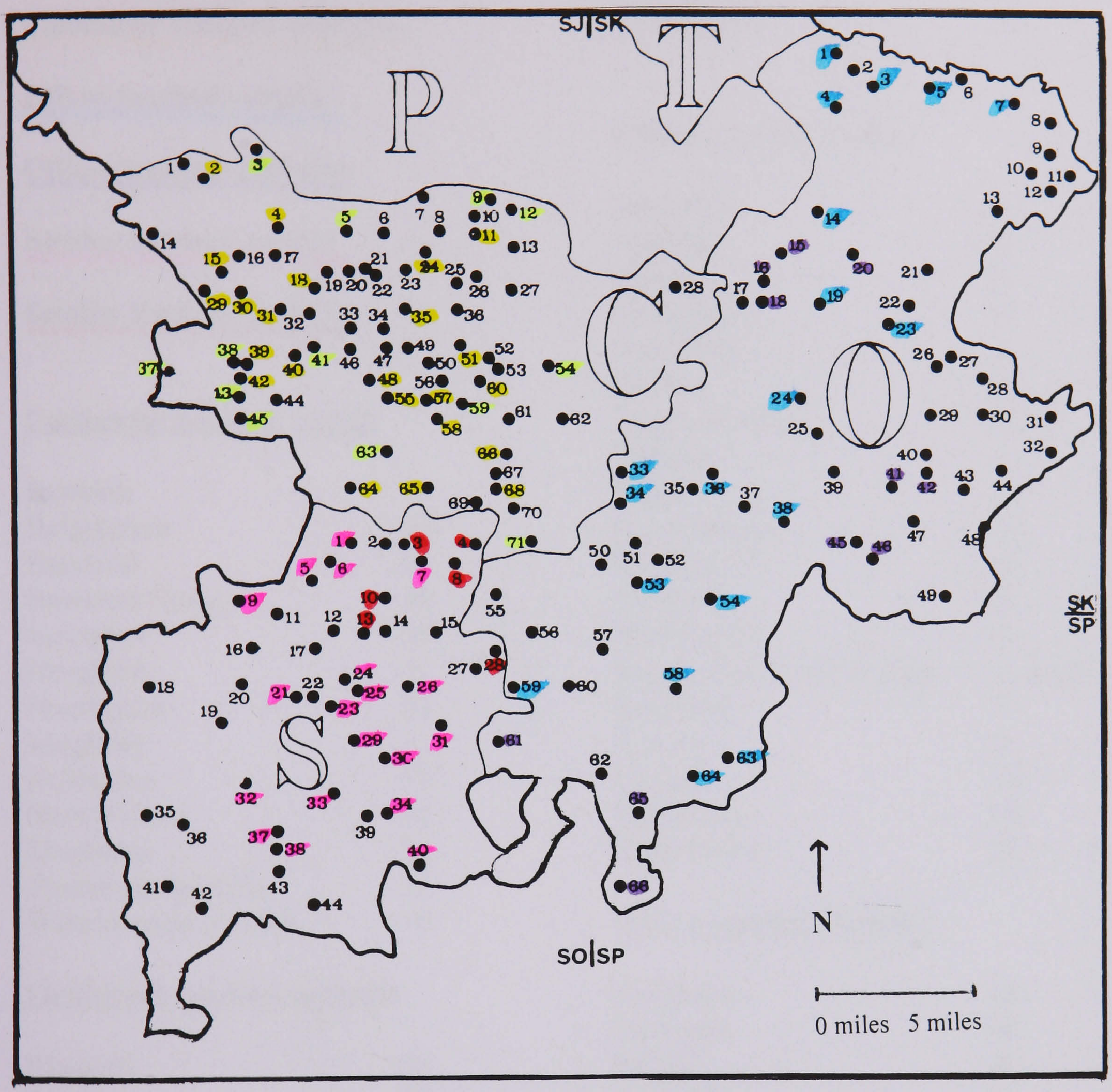
Abbey Hulton and Rushton	
Grange	15 & 16
Almington	45
Ashley	35
Aston and Stoke-by-Stone	63 & 64
Barlaston	30
Blithfield	118
Bradeley	8
Burslem	7
Cooksland	101
Creswell	103
Derrington	108
Hilderstone	55
Hopton	86
Ingestre	114
Knutton	12
Madeley	11
Maer	36
Meaford	43
Milwich	65
Moddershall	44
Norton-in-the-Moors	9
High Offley	98
Ranton	104
Salt	85
Sandon	83
Standon and the Rudge	47 & 51
Swynnerton	42
Tittensor	38
Tixall	115

Totmonslow hundred: certain

Blore	16
Bramshall	43
Bradley-in-the-Moors	29
Cauldon	15
Caverswall	20
Dilhorne	21
Ellaston	28
Gratwich	45
Grindon	8
Madeley Holme	37
Tean	33

Totmonslow hundred: probable

Kingsley	18



Map 6: Places in Staffordshire assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources: South Staffordshire. Adapted from A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976)

The map distinguishes between those places that can be said to have certainly belonged to Cuttlestone, Offlow or Seisdon hundreds in 1086 and those places that can be said to have probably done so. Places said to have certainly belonged to a hundred are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources and are not separated from the corresponding hundred rubric in the Domesday text by any 'problem' entries. Places said to have probably belonged to a hundred are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources but are separated from the corresponding rubric by one or more 'problem' entries. The hundredal boundaries shown on the map were intended by the editors to depict the situation in 1086, but can only be shown to depict hundredal arrangements in the thirteenth century and later.

Key to Map 6

Cuttlestone hundred: certain

Cuttlestone hundred: probable

Offlow hundred: certain

Offlow hundred: probable

Seisdon hundred: certain

Seisdon hundred: probable

Cuttlestone hundred: certain

Baswich	9
Beighterton	43
Brewood	63
Brockton Grange	38
Essington	71
Haughton	5
Huntington	54
Knightley	3
Rodbaston	59
Sheriff Hales	37
Shushions	41
Walton-on-the-Hill	12
Weston-under-Lizard	45

Cuttlestone hundred: probable

Blymhill	42
Brineton	39
Chillington	64
Church Eaton	18
Coppenhall	24
Coven	65
Gailey	58
Gnosall	4
Lapley	48
Levedale	35
Marston (near Church Eaton)	40
Moreton (near Gnosall)	29
Norbury	2
High Onn	31
Otherton	60
Penkridge	51
Rickerscote	11
Great Saredon	66
Shareshill	68
Stretton	55
Walton Grange	30
Water Eaton	57
Wilbrighton	15

Offlow hundred: certain

Agardsley	4
Aldridge	54
Alrewas	23
Great Barr	58
Perry Barr	63
Bradley	59
King's Bromley	19
Draycott	3
Fauld	5
Hammerwich	36
Handsworth	64
Lichfield	25
Marchington	1
Norton Canes and Wyrley	33 & 34
Rolleston	7
Rowley	14
Rushall	53
Shenstone	38
Stytchbrook	24

Offlow hundred: probable

Handsacre	18
Harborne	66
Hints	46
Packington	41
Hamstall Ridware	15
Pipe Ridware	16
Smethwick	65
Tamhorn	42
Tipton	61
Weeford	45
Yoxall	20

Seisdon hundred: certain

Amblecote	40
Bobbington	32
Chasepool	33
Codsall	1

Enville	38
Himley	30
Kingswinford	34
Morfe	37
Oaken	6
Orton	25
Oxley	7
Patshull	9
Lower Penn	24
Upper Penn	26
Sedgley	31
Seisdon	21
Trysull	23
Wombourn	29
Wrottesley	5

Seisdon hundred: probable

Bilston	28
Bushbury	8
Moseley	4
Pendeford	3
Tettenhall	10
Wightwick	13

entries to Totmonslow hundred, or whether the places in question belonged to Pirehill hundred in 1086, and were later transferred to Totmonslow.[75] Since North-East Staffordshire is the most agriculturally marginal area of the shire, the second explanation is not as unlikely as it may first appear to be, and it may be significant that none of the king's lands are said by Domesday Book to be within Totmonslow hundred. One might postulate that Totmonslow hundred originally comprised only those parts of North-East Staffordshire that did not provide distant, more affluent, estates in other hundreds with access to upland resources and so were attached to the hundred to which their 'senior' manor belonged at the time. But in the absence of further evidence this must remain an unsubstantiated hypothesis.

It has also proved more than usually difficult to assign places to a hundred in the vicinity of Tamworth – more specifically in the area which lies between Lichfield's Domesday manor and the River Tame. It will be seen that the early administrative history of this part of Staffordshire appears to have been extremely complex: for instance, the early parochial geography of the Tamworth area has proved similarly difficult to reconstruct, and that the shire boundary took a peculiar course in this area, bisecting the town centre in the nineteenth century.[76] Relatively few manors can likewise be assigned to hundreds in the Burton area, or immediately west of Wolverhampton, but this probably relates to the obscurity of Domesday Book's evidence. In 1086 Burton Abbey and the Canons of Wolverhampton held a lot of land around Burton and Wolverhampton respectively, and, unfortunately, these holdings mainly appear in sections of the Domesday text which contain no hundred headings at all, and so cannot be assigned to a hundred in 1086.

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[75] We shall see that North-East Staffordshire's parochial geography has proved similarly difficult to reconstruct: Chapter 7.3.
[76] See Chapter 4.3.4, p. 111.

Ultimately, this chapter has shown that reconstructing Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds is a far more difficult task than is usually acknowledged. This means that the traditional model for Staffordshire's origins, i.e. that its extent was determined by an administrative scheme which dictated that each of its hundreds should be assessed at a round number of hides, cannot be shown to work in practice. That is to say, the full layout of the shire's late eleventh-century hundreds cannot be reconstructed reliably, and so it is not possible to calculate accurately the hidage assessment carried by each one at that time. The chapter has not, however, shown that this scheme cannot have operated in the shire. Rather, it has shown that the hidage assessment recorded for Staffordshire in Domesday Book does not prove the existence of such a scheme, and provides no strong grounds for thinking that the shire was effectively created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in which there were no existing sub-provincial territories, or in one in which existing administrative territories were ignored when the shire boundaries were first laid out.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 Introduction

It has been seen that the traditional model for Staffordshire's origins proposes that when the shire was created its hundreds were assessed in round numbers of hides.[1] But this model, based on the hidage assessments recorded for the shire in the County Hidage and Domesday Book, cannot be shown to work in practice. This is because, firstly, we do not know the date of origin or purpose of the County Hidage, and, secondly, it is not possible to calculate accurately the number of hides attached to each of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086.[2] Moreover, Domesday Book does not record Staffordshire's original hidage assessment, only how many hides the shire carried in 1086.

It is believed that some shires either experienced reductions in their geld quotas between the time of their creation and 1086, or at least carried a relatively light hidage assessment at the end of the eleventh century. For instance, F.W. Maitland and David Roffe have argued that Kent had a relatively low geld quota in 1086, with Roffe saying that even 'taking into consideration differences in resources and landscape, [Kent] is comparatively lightly assessed compared with neighbouring Sussex and Surrey'.[3] David Roffe has also argued that prior to Domesday Book Northamptonshire was assessed at 3,200 hides, in which case the *c.* 1350 hides which Domesday records for the shire would represent a 60% reduction from its earlier assessment. Nevertheless, we can be less certain about Northamptonshire's pre-1086 hidage assessment than Roffe implies. This is because his view of the pre-Domesday

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[1] See Chapter 1.3.1.
[2] See Chapter 2.
[3] F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), pp. 466-67; D. Roffe, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), p. 192.

hidage value recorded for the shire in the County Hidage, and so assumes that this source was compiled before Domesday Book. His view also takes as its basis the fact that the shire had 32 hundreds in 1086, and so assumes that each of these hundreds was originally assessed at one hundred hides.[4]

If such reductions to hidage assessments were made it is unclear whether they would result from a single plan implemented within certain shires at some point prior to the compilation of Domesday Book, or from piecemeal changes to the hidage assessments of individual manors made at various times. There are reasons to think that the latter situation occurred many times throughout England. Domesday Book records that many manors had enjoyed a relatively light rate of 'tax' assessment prior to 1086, and implies that this was because changes had been made to the hidage ratings of the manors in question. For instance, some manors belonging to the king and to major churches were exempt from 'taxation' by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.[5] Others were subject to beneficial hidation, and so although not freed from the burden of 'taxation', were assessed at a smaller number of hides than they really contained.[6] An example is Much Wenlock (Shropshire), which was assessed at 20 hides in 1086, but which had once enjoyed a reduced geld quota, since four of these hides were said to be '*quietæ a geldo T.R. chunut . 7 aliæ geld*" ('exempt from tax in King Cnut's time, the others paid tax').[7]

Staffordshire had a very low hidage Domesday assessment compared to many Midland shires in 1086.[8] This chapter will therefore investigate whether there is any

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 193; also: C.R. Hart, *The Hidation of Northamptonshire* (Leicester University Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, 2nd series, 3, 1970). For Northamptonshire's hidage assessments in the County Hidage and Domesday Book: see Chapter 1.3.1, p. 8.
[5] Maitland, *Domesday Book*, p. 448.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 448-49.
[7] Domesday Book [hereafter DB], f. 252; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Shropshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986), 3c2.
[8] See Chapter 1.3.1, p. 8.

evidence that changes had been made to Staffordshire's hidage assessment between the late Anglo-Saxon period and 1086. This may throw new light on the shire's origins and early history in two ways. If, for instance, there were signs that the number of hides assigned to Staffordshire's manors had been significantly reduced or increased prior to 1086 this would indicate that the *c.* 500 hides recorded for the shire in Domesday Book are unlikely to reflect its original assessment, and thereby further diminish the usefulness of that figure for throwing light on Staffordshire's origins. Any widespread reductions in the shire's hidage assessment would be presumably the result of privileges granted by the king, as was the case at Much Wenlock; any widespread increases, on the other hand, would suggest that the crown had at some point attempted to boost the revenue it derived from the shire.[9] Alternatively, if the hidage assessments of Staffordshire's manors appear to have been stable throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, this might indicate that the *c.* 500 hides carried by the shire in 1086 are a reliable guide to its original geld assessment.

3.2 Staffordshire's pre-Conquest hidage assessment

No entry in the Staffordshire Domesday folios contains explicit evidence of beneficial hidation similar to the one for Much Wenlock. Nevertheless it is likely that one manor at least had once been granted a similar privilege since Worfield was valued at just £3 in 1066 – a conspicuously low figure considering that the manor was assessed at 30 hides. This strongly suggests that Worfield did not pay 'tax' on all 30 hides in the late Anglo-Saxon period, but, if so, since the manor was valued at £18 in 1086, it seems

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[9] For discussion of the benefits of beneficial hidation to landholders: D. Roffe, *Domesday: The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 234-35.

either that this privilege had been lost, or that its terms had become less favourable by the late eleventh century.[10]

It may, however, be possible to assess whether the *c.* 500 hides recorded for Staffordshire in Domesday Book are likely to reflect earlier geld ratings by comparing the hidage totals recorded for places that are named in pre-Conquest charters relating to the area that came to be known as Staffordshire with the totals recorded for the same places in Domesday Book.[11] Such a comparison will not be without its difficulties. It will not, for instance, be possible to say how the hidage ratings recorded for a land-unit in any single pre-Conquest charter relate to the assessment that the place in question carried at the time of Staffordshire's creation, because we do not know when the shire came into being. It is also difficult to assess the spatial relationship for the land-units concerned in the late Anglo-Saxon period and in 1086. While Anglo-Saxon charters often contain boundary clauses, which, so long as they can be solved reliably, allow the boundaries of the relevant land-units to be mapped, Domesday Book records only the names of Staffordshire's manors, and does not say where on the ground the boundaries between them lay. This is problematic because without good reasons to believe that the hidage assessments assigned to places named in late Anglo-Saxon charters and Domesday Book relate to land-units of a similar extent, there is no way of telling whether any changes in hidage assessments result from alterations to hidage ratings, or merely from the land-units in question being of a different size.

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[10] Domesday Book records that three of the 30 hides at Worfield were 'waste' in 1086. If on this occasion 'waste' signified the removal of land from the obligations of geld and service, as opposed to merely its physical devastation, this may imply that the manor was not taxed on all 30 hides in the late eleventh century: DB, f. 248; A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976) [hereafter *DB: Staffs.*], 9,1.

[11] A similar investigation has already been made, in very general terms, by C.F. Slade. He concluded that 'although the general ['tax'] burden did not change appreciably it is possible that a reassessment of the burden within the county took place somewhere towards the end of the 10th century': C.F. Slade, 'Introduction to the Staffordshire Domesday', in L.M. Midgley (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume IV* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 4-5.

Later evidence may, however, provide clues towards the geographical extents of Domesday manors. An increasing body of evidence indicates that the layout of certain early land-units can, in general terms, often be recovered from modern sources.[12] For example, Charles Drew argued that his work in Dorset indicated that 'modern' parishes often enclosed exactly the same areas as one or more medieval manors, but rarely cut through them.[13] Specifically he argued that the pasture and woodland recorded within Domesday Book for the manor of Steepleton Iwerne was discernible in the 'modern' parish of the same name.[14] Christopher Taylor, also working in Dorset, argued that Didlington Farm in Chalbury parish corresponded to the Domesday holding of Didlington.[15] Thus, the extents of Staffordshire's nineteenth-century ecclesiastical parishes might, in theory, provide clues towards the extent of the Domesday manor or manors contained within them. This means that if the boundaries of any ecclesiastical parish or township were similar to those recorded for a land-unit of the same name in a pre-Conquest charter, we will have grounds for thinking that the hidage total recorded in the charter in question can be compared meaningfully with that recorded in Domesday Book, i.e. because there are reasons to believe that both totals may relate to essentially the same land-unit.[16]

There are, however, problems in applying this methodology to Staffordshire, and, indeed, certain weaknesses in the studies themselves. Firstly, neither Taylor nor Drew explains the basis of his charter boundary solutions, and nor do they specify whether they are referring to early nineteenth-century ecclesiastical parishes or

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[12] The importance in distinguishing between early nineteenth-century ecclesiastical parishes and modern civil ones is discussed below, pp. 72-73.
[13] C.D. Drew, 'The Manors of the Iwerne Valley, Dorset: A Study of Early County Planning', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, 69 (1948), p. 36.
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
[15] C. Taylor, *Dorset* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1970), p. 50.
[16] For further discussion of the recovery of early systems of landscape organisation from modern sources: D.W. Probert, 'Church and Landscape: A Study in Social Transition in South-Western Britain, A.D. *c.* 400 to *c.* 1200' (unpublished University of Birmingham PhD thesis, 2002), pp. 1-7.

modern-day civil ones.[17] This is important: while there are good reasons for believing that early nineteenth-century parish boundaries are *generally* reflective of England's parochial landscape from *c.* 1300 onwards, some parish boundaries were altered in the mid nineteenth century – and so twentieth-century civil parishes are less likely to be a reliable guide to the extents of earlier land units. At the time of the 1911 census, for example, it was recorded that 'there are now only about 6,000 instances in which the ecclesiastical and civil [parish] boundaries coincide' (out of 14,614 civil parishes and 14,387 ecclesiastical parishes in England and Wales).[18] Another pressing concern is that both of studies concern Dorset, geographically far removed from Staffordshire, and so it is only an assumption that the situation which Drew and Taylor describe pertains in Staffordshire too. Indeed, there is a danger that work in other parts of England has led to the assumption that there *should* be a similar correlation between late Anglo-Saxon land-units and ecclesiastical parishes in Staffordshire too. This may have influenced previous attempts to solve the bounds recorded in the shire's pre-Conquest charters, predisposing scholars to follow the line of the relevant ecclesiastical parish in their solutions when all else fails.[19]

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[17] For further discussion: *ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

[18] *Census of England and Wales 1911 Volume II: Registration Areas* (London: HMSO, 1912-22), p. iv. For further discussion: S.R. Bassett, *The Origins of the Parishes of the Deerhurst Area* (Deerhurst Lecture for 1997, 1998), p. 5; *idem*, 'Boundaries of Knowledge: Mapping the Land Units of Late Anglo-Saxon and Norman England', in W. Davies, G. Halsall & A. Reynolds (eds), *People and Space in the Middle Ages, 300-1300* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 116, n.2; C.N.L. Brooke, 'Rural Ecclesiastical Institutions in England: The Search for their Origins', *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto: 1982), pp. 696-97; Probert, 'Church and Landscape', pp. 33-36. Yet, as the statistic quoted in the main body of the text shows, ecclesiastical and civil parish boundaries do not always differ (or differ greatly). In some fundamentally rural areas (like Dorset) scholars may neglect to say whether they are talking about early nineteenth- or twentieth-century parish boundaries because they know that the vast majority did not change. A similar situation can sometimes be observed in Staffordshire. For example, the mid nineteenth-century ecclesiastical and mid twentieth-century civil and parishes of Madeley are almost identical: LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Madeley (1840); OS 1:25000 Series Sheet SJ 74 (1958).

[19] See discussion of the Darlaston charter [S 602 (BCS 954)] below: pp. 79-84.

3.3 Staffordshire's pre-Conquest charters

The chronological and geographical spread of the small corpus of pre-Conquest 'Staffordshire' charters is intermittent and uneven. The earliest charter which might relate to the area which came to be known as Staffordshire perhaps concerns Whittington, near Lichfield, and is dated 925, although the *Hwituntune* mentioned within the document cannot be securely located. This is because the charter contains no boundary clause; had it done so, it may have been possible to relate it confidently to one of the places in the Midlands with the modern name 'Whittington'.[20] Indeed, of the 17 Anglo-Saxon charters which are generally agreed to relate to places in Staffordshire, none are earlier than 942.[21] Eight of the 17 contain no hidage totals and so cannot be used to compare pre-Conquest hidage values to those recorded in Domesday Book. These charters concern Marchington, in South-East Staffordshire, dated 951 [S 557 (BCS 890)]; Pillaton, near Penkridge in Central Staffordshire, dated 996 [S 879]; a confirmation of the endowment of Burton Abbey from 1004 [S 906]; a document from the reign of Edward the Confessor concerning Wolverhampton [S 1115], and four more from his reign that mention Perton, near Wolverhampton [S 1039, S 1040, S 1043, and S 1140].

The hidage totals recorded in three more charters cannot be compared reliably with those recorded in Domesday Book. The first charter is dated 957 and relates to Little Aston and one of the Barr manors (probably Great Barr), both in South-East Staffordshire, and records a hidage value of five *mansiunculae* for these places, which

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[20] S 395 (BCS 642). Birch and Cyril Hart (the latter tentatively) both identified *Hwituntune* as Whittington near Lichfield: W. Birch (ed.), *Cartularium Saxonicum: A Collection of Charters Relating to Anglo-Saxon History Volume II: 880-947* (London: Whiting, 1887); C.R. Hart, *The Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), no. 80, p. 90. Peter Sawyer, however, argues that if *Hwitunutne* (Whittington) was within Mercia – as the witness list suggests it ought to be – then there were seven possible places that the charter might be referring to, the most likely, he feels, being Whittington near Chesterfield (Derbyshire): P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Charters of Burton Abbey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), no. 2, p. 5.

[21] S 479 (BCS 771).

is usually interpreted as meaning hides [S 574 (BCS 987)].[22] Little Aston does not appear by name in Domesday Book and so we do not know what its Domesday hidage value was (although its total could conceivably have been included in the three hides assigned to nearby Shenstone).[23] Moreover, there are two Domesday entries which relate to a place now named Barr, and whose forms are rendered as *Barra*, and *Barre* respectively. The first manor, held by a certain Robert in 1086, is sometimes identified as Great Barr – although frustratingly scholars have not explained the basis of their view that this is not Little Barr. The identification of the second, held by Drogo at the time of the survey, has traditionally been less certain: Alison Hawkins and Alex Rumble tentatively suggested that this entry referred to Great Barr, but C.F. Slade left the manor unidentified, saying only that 'this is probably the *Parva Barre* (Little Barr) of the 1327 Subsidy Roll where it is returned with Perry Barr'.[24] Consequently, since the Domesday hidage assessments of Little Aston and Great Barr is uncertain, there is no way of telling whether they had been altered between the mid tenth century and 1086. We find a similarly problematic situation in the case of a charter concerning Wetmoor, near modern Burton-upon-Trent, and dated to 1012 [S 930], which is too obviously a copy of an earlier document relating to Rolleston [S 920] for us to trust the information recorded within it.[25]

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[22] References to *reod lege* and *stræt lēa* in the charter's boundary clause suggests to Della Hooke that the place named *Eastun* in the charter can be identified as Little Aston near Shenstone, which she identifies as Radley Moors, which lay just north of Little Aston in the nineteenth century, and Streetly, located to the east of it. She identifies *bearre* as Great Barr by, amongst other things, the charter's reference to the 'old beacon', which Hooke suggests is 'undoubtedly a reference to Barr Beacon at SP 061974' (in Great Barr township): D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon Staffordshire: The Charter Evidence* (Keele: University of Keele, 1983), pp. 102-03.

[23] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 8,32.

[24] DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 12,25 & 12,28; Slade, 'Introduction', nos 247 & 250, p. 55 n. 79. Perry Barr is usually identified as the entry rendered as *Perio* in the survey: DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 12,27.

[25] Sawyer argued that the Wetmoor charter is 'spurious'. The hidage total recorded in this charter for Wetmoor is the same as the total recorded for the Domesday manor of the same name. Hart feels that this is 'suspicious' because 'it is known that the demesne of estates acquired by [Burton Abbey, to which Wetmoor belonged in 1086] was relieved of its assessment': Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 35, p. 69; Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 94, pp. 98 & 239. Nevertheless, it is still possible that the one and a

The third 'problem' charter concerns a grant by King Æthelred of ten hides to a certain Wulfrun in 985, nine of which were said to be at Wolverhampton and the other one at Trescott, located immediately west of Wolverhampton [S 860]. The charter survives within the *Codex Wintoniensis*, the name commonly given to a cartulary compiled at Winchester Cathedral Priory *c.* 1130-1150.[26] Trescott appears in Domesday Book as *Cott*, when it was assessed at one virgate (i.e. a quarter of a hide), but there is no entry for Wolverhampton in Domesday Book.[27] The first entry in the chapter for the Canons of Wolverhampton records that the canons held one hide from Samson but does not say where that hide was located. The entry is nevertheless sometimes thought to relate to Wolverhampton itself, probably because Wolverhampton's canons might reasonably be expected to have held land there, and because otherwise Wolverhampton does not have a Domesday entry of its own.[28] But all that can be said of this entry is that it may or may not relate to Wolverhampton, and so we do not know whether the hidage assessment for the land-unit named in the charter had been reduced by 1086. Trescott's hidage rating may have been reduced from one hide to a virgate by the time of the Domesday survey, but since Trescott is not included within the charter's boundary clause, it is not possible how judge how likely this land-unit's late tenth-century extent is to reflect *Cott*'s in 1086.[29]

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half hides recorded within the charter was an accurate assessment for Wetmoor in 1012. S 920 is discussed below, p. 91.

[26] C.G.O. Bridgeman (ed.), 'Staffordshire Pre-Conquest Charters', *The William Salt Archaeological Society: Collections for a History of Staffordshire* [hereafter *SHC*], 1916, p. 103; Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 89, p. 97. For the *Codex Wintoniensis*: *idem*, 'The *Codex Wintoniensis* and the King's *Haligdom*' in J. Thirsk (ed.), *Land, Church and People: Essays Presented to H.P.R. Finberg* (Reading: Museum of English Rural Life, 1970), pp. 7-38.

[27] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 7,4.

[28] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 7,1; Slade, 'Introduction', p. 44, n. 61.

[29] Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 64.

This leaves only six pre-Conquest charters whose hidage totals can be compared with those recorded in Domesday Book.[30] Each will be considered in turn. While there are clearly limits to the general conclusions that can be drawn from such a small corpus of charters, they at least provide a series of snapshots in the tenth- and eleventh-centuries with which the hidage totals recorded in Domesday Book can be compared. Five of the charters contain boundary clauses, and the results of previous work on their solutions will be surveyed, for the purpose of comparing the boundaries described in general terms to the layout of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical parishes or townships. Although providing solutions to Staffordshire's Anglo-Saxon charter boundary clauses is not the main purpose of this chapter, the boundary statement included in one charter, that for Darlaston [S 602 (BCS 954)], will be discussed in detail, as this clause neatly illustrates many of the difficulties involved in their study.

3.3.1 Edmund's charter concerning Alrewas and other places [S 479 (BCS 771)]

This charter, dated 942, contains a hidage assessment but no boundary clause. This means that although the hidage values of places listed in the charter can be compared to those recorded in Domesday Book, there is no way of assessing the spatial relationship between the land-units concerned in the 940s and 1086. It survives as a thirteenth-century copy, whose trustworthiness is not doubted.[31] The charter concerns a grant of 40 hides made by King Edmund to a certain Wulfsige the Black at Alrewas,

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[30] Another charter, concerning a place called *Eatun*, has been tentatively identified as Church Eaton (Staffordshire), situated approximately six miles south-west of Stafford: Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 81, p. 91; S 392 (BCS 746). The charter is not discussed here because it is considered to be spurious and Hart's suggested identification has not been adopted by other scholars: *ibid*; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 4, pp. 8-9. Hart's identification is rejected by Margaret Gelling, who argues that the first element of the charter's '*eaton*' is derived from OE *ēa* ('river'), whereas the suffix in Church Eaton is derived from OE *ēg* ('island'): M. Gelling, 'Some Thoughts on Staffordshire Place-Names', *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 21 (1981), p. 6. Also: D. Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood: David Horovitz, 2005), p. 242.

[31] Bridgeman (ed.), 'Staffordshire', no. 6, pp. 81-84; Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 82, p. 91; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 5, p. 11.

'Bromley', Barton-under-Needwood, Tatenhill, Branston, Stretton, Rolleston, Clifton Campville and Haunton, all located in South-East Staffordshire, lying on or close to the River Trent.

There is, however, more than one Domesday entry for a place called 'Bromley' in South-East Staffordshire, and so it is unclear to which entry or entries the place named as *Bromleage* ('Bromley') in the charter relates. Cyril Hart has proposed that although 'topographical reasons' indicate that *Bromleage* is more likely to be King's Bromley than Abbot's Bromley, the fact that a later charter records that Wulsige the Black was a former owner of Abbot's Bromley, suggests to him that in 942 the name *Bromleage* covered both places. He does not explain these 'topographical reasons' any further, but Hart may have in mind the fact that Bromley is sandwiched between Alrewas and Barton-under-Needwood in the charter's text, and King's Bromley is situated closer to these places than is Abbot's Bromley.[32] But for present purposes it matters little to which Domesday entry or entries the charter's *Bromleage* relates, since Table 6 shows that Domesday Book assigns significantly fewer than 40 hides to the places in named in the charter irrespective of whether the combined hidage totals of both Abbot's Bromley and King's Bromley are included in the calculation, or if the calculation includes only one of those places.

Nevertheless, it would be unwise to assume that there must have been a reduction the hidage ratings of the places concerned between the 940s and 1086. We cannot be certain of the Domesday hidage total for the places named in the charter because neither Tatenhill nor Haunton have Domesday entries (although it is conceivable that their values are included within those for recorded for Branston and

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[32] Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 82, p. 91. The later charter concerning Abbot's Bromley is S 878 and is discussed below, pp. 89-91. 'Bromley' seems unlikely to relate to Gerrard's Bromley, because it is located in North-West Staffordshire, near Stone, whereas the rest of the places granted by Edmund are situated in the south-east of the shire.

Clifton Campville respectively, since Tatenhill is located adjacent to Branston and Haunton adjacent to Clifton Campville).[33] Moreover, even if Tatenhill's and Haunton's Domesday hidage assessments were included in those recorded for Branston and Clifton Campville, we do not know whether the extents of the land-units concerned were the same in 1086 as they had been in 942 because, as has been seen, the charter contains no boundary clause.

Table 6: Domesday hidage values for the places named in S 479

Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.* reference	**Place**	**Domesday hidage value**
1,11	Alrewas	3
1,12	King's Bromley	3
4,5	Abbot's Bromley	½
1,20	Barton-under-Needwood	3
4,2	Branston	1½
4,4	Stretton	1½
10,3	Rolleston	2½
1,29	Clifton Campville	8
Total hides:	including both Abbot's and King's Bromley:	**23**
	including Abbot's Bromley only:	**20**
	including King's Bromley only:	**22½**

3.3.2 Eadwig's charter concerning Darlaston [S 602 (BCS 954)]

This charter relates to a grant of land assessed at one hide at Darlaston, in North-West Staffordshire immediately west of modern Stone, made to a certain Æthelnoth. It is dated 956 and is generally thought to be trustworthy.[34] It is written in Latin, with an Old English boundary clause, and forms part of the archives of Burton Abbey. It survives in two copies, which will be called WSL 84/1/41 and Peniarth 390. The second manuscript dates from the middle of the thirteenth century and is possibly a

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[33] Unlike the charter relating to Wolverhampton and Trescott discussed above [S 860], the majority of places named in the charter do have a Domesday entry. Thus, so long as we keep these caveats in mind, comparing the hidage totals of the two sources seems reasonable.

[34] Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 86, p. 94; S. Keynes (ed.), *Facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 4; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 17, p. 29.

copy of WSL 84/1/41.[35] There is disagreement over whether WSL 84/1/41 was copied out soon after the time of the original grant or up to a century later, which highlights a methodological issue relating to the use of Anglo-Saxon charters: few historians – this one included – have the expertise needed to date manuscripts accurately from their formulae and palaeography alone, and so are reliant on the work of others. It can therefore be difficult to judge when a charter was copied out, particularly if there is disagreement over the date of the hand. It is important to know from when this manuscript dates because if WSL 84/1/41 was copied out in the mid eleventh century then we have to face the possibility that its Old English boundary clause describes the land-unit called Darlaston as it was in the mid eleventh-century, rather than in 956.[36] It is also important to remember that in 1004 land at Darlaston was granted to Burton, in whose archives this charter was deposited.[37] Separate boundary clauses, unconnected with a charter, were sometimes kept in the archives of monastic houses like Burton, and so it is possible that the boundary clause appended to this charter relates to the land-unit granted to Burton by 1004 rather than to the one granted to Æthelnoth in 956 (although the two land-units may, of course, be of the same extent).[38]

Even if the boundary described in the charter does describe the land-unit granted by Eadwig to Æthelnoth in 956, its course is yet to be satisfactorily solved. Two solutions have so far been offered in print, by Cyril Hart and Della Hooke, and

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[35] WSL 84/1/41 & Aberystwyth, N.L.W., Peniarth 390, 173rv = pp. 345-6 (s. xiii med.).

[36] Peter Sawyer noted the similarity of this text to that of another charter concerning Pillaton (Staffordshire) dated 996 [S 879], see above, p. 74. He argues that the two were probably based on an 'authentic text'. Since Burton Abbey held Darlaston in 1086, he argued that S 602 was perhaps produced in the late eleventh century 'to give greater authority to bounds which appear to be older'. Cyril Hart disagreed and argued that the charter's palaeography showed that it was contemporary with the date of the charter, or a little later. More recently, Simon Keynes has taken the middle ground, saying that the charter could date either from the mid tenth or late eleventh century: Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 175; Keynes (ed.), *Facsimiles*, p. 4. For the dating of Peniarth 390: Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, p. xiv.

[37] S 906; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 28 pp. xxxi & 51.

[38] *Ibid.*, no. 17, p. 29.

Peter Sawyer has also made some suggestions about the boundary's course. But detailed fieldwork will be required if the clause is to be solved properly – if, indeed, it can be solved at all.

The boundary clause begins by saying '*Hit fehð on trentan þær fulan bróc scýt on trentan*' ('first along the Trent where the foul brook joins the Trent').[39] The Trent formed the eastern boundary of Darlaston township recorded on its tithe map of 1850, until the point where the river was joined by a tributary, now called the Filly Brook, at modern Fillybrooks [located at National Grid Reference SJ 897337].[40] All of the places mentioned in the discussion of Darlaston's boundary clause are shown on Map 7. Hart, Hooke and Sawyer all argue that the charter's 'foul brook' is the modern Filly Brook, an identification that is accepted as linguistically sound by David Horovitz, who suggests that both names are derived from OE *ful* ('foul', 'dirty', 'muddy', 'filthy').[41] It therefore seems that there is at least a degree of correlation between the boundaries of the ecclesiastical parish and those of the earlier land-unit.

The boundary clause continues '*þonne andlang broces ongean stream on fulanford*' ('then along the brook against the stream to the foul ford'). The 'foul ford' is unidentified. Hart suggests it is the point where the modern A34 crosses the Filly Brook [at SJ 896336], located around a hundred yards upstream of Fillybrooks. Hooke, on the other hand, does not attempt to locate the precise position of the 'foul ford', but states only that the Filly Brook forms the southern boundary of Darlaston township in the nineteenth century.[42] Locating the 'foul ford' is made more difficult by the fact that the location of the next boundary point recorded in the charter is also

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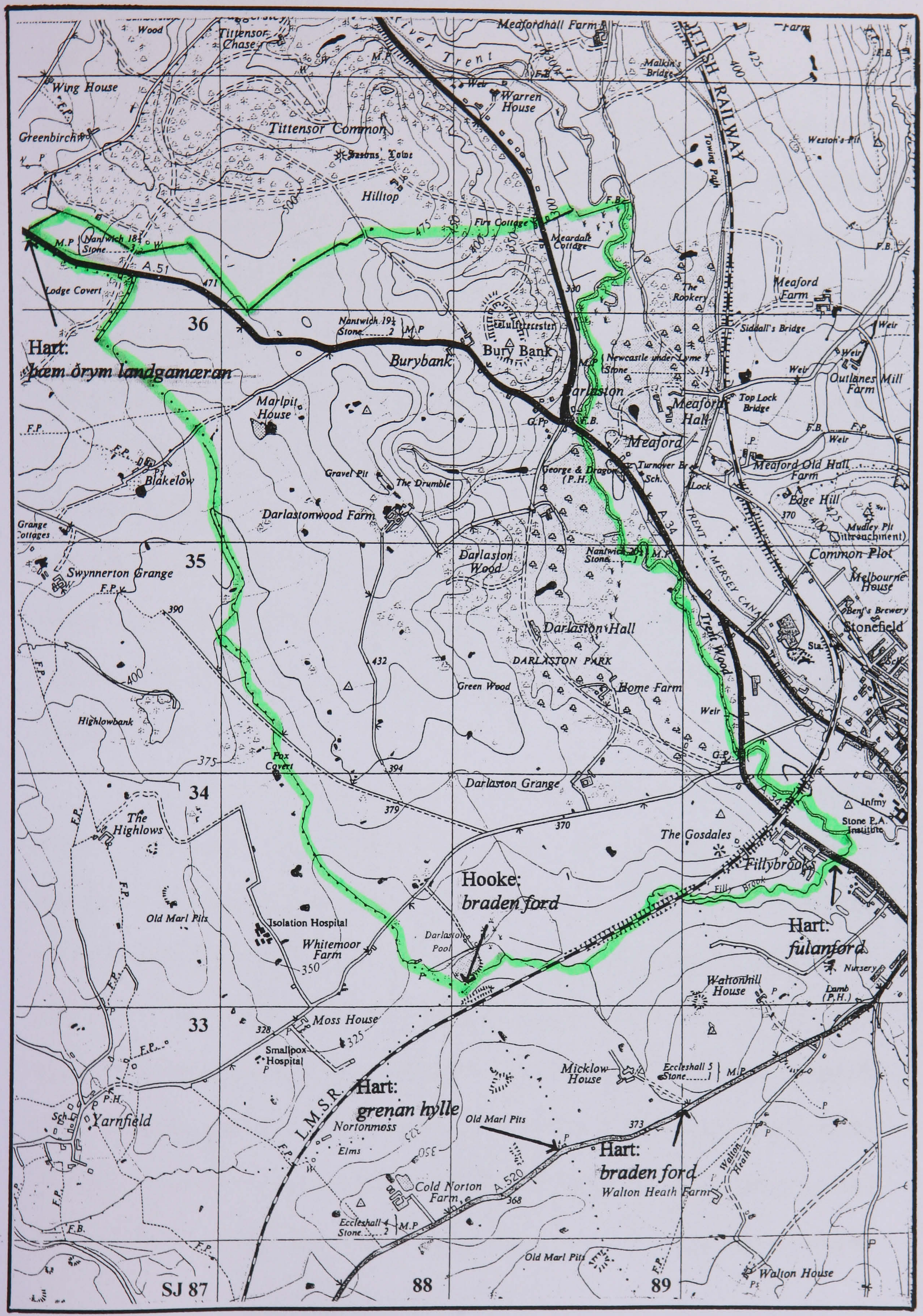
[39] This transcription, and all subsequent ones concerning S 602, are taken from Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, No. 17, p. 27; this and all subsequent translations from Old English: Hooke, *The Landscape*, pp. 87-88.
[40] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Darlaston (1850).
[41] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 178; Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 87; Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 437; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 17, p. 29.
[42] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 178; Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 87.



Map 7: Darlaston township (1850). Township boundary highlighted

Mapped from LROB/A/15 Tithe Map for Darlaston (1850)
Base map: OS 1:25000 Series Sheet 33/83 (1947)

uncertain. The charter states that the boundary then moved '*of ðæm forda on braden ford*' ('from the ford to the broad ford'). Hart postulates that it followed the Filly Brook upstream for just under a mile, and then turned sharply southwards at SJ 884332, thereby following the course of a tributary of the Filly Brook. The 'broad ford', he suggests, was at the point where the modern A520 crosses the tributary of the Filly Brook [at SJ 890325], because 'one would expect a broad shallow ford at this point from the flat nature of the ground'.[43] According to Hart's reconstruction the ecclesiastical parish boundary would here diverge from that recorded in the charter. But this section of the charter's boundary must remain unidentified because we do not know the locations of the 'foul' and 'broad' fords, and because the charter does not state explicitly at what point the boundary left the Filly Brook. Indeed, Hooke acknowledges these difficulties, and says only that the 'broad ford' was perhaps at the south-western corner of Darlaston township [at SJ 881331], although without indicating why.[44]

The clause states that from the 'broad ford' the boundary moved '*þest andland stræte on hþæte croft of ðæm crofte on grenan hylle*' ('westwards along the road to the wheat croft'). Hart suggests that the boundary went west along the modern A520 to a small hillock [at SJ 885324], which he feels is 'the only possible location for the green hill'. Hooke, on the other hand, suggests that the 'croft' was situated near to modern Whitemoor Farm, and was detached from the rest of the land-unit described in the boundary clause. The basis of her view is that a road formerly followed the southern part of the western boundary of Darlaston, which, she says, perhaps crossed the Filly Brook at the 'foul ford'.[45] The validity of both suggestions, however,

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[43] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 178.
[44] Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 87.
[45] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 148; Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 87.

depends upon Hart and Hooke having reliably identified the location of the 'broad ford'.

The next two boundary points recorded in the clause are also currently unidentified. These are '*slædes*' ('the slade') and '*stræt*' ('the road'). Indeed, the next place in the clause which has been confidently located by both scholars is the '*ðrym landgamæran*' (the 'three boundaries'), which Hooke says is either the meeting-point of the nineteenth-century parish boundaries of Swynnerton, Beech and Darlaston [SJ 862363], or that of Beech, Tittensor and Darlaston [SJ 863374]. Hart feels that it is the former place.[46] If these suggestions are correct it would once again imply that the extent of the nineteenth-century township of Darlaston at least partly reflected that of the land-unit described in the charter. Indeed, given the body of evidence that suggests that the layout of certain early land-units may be reflected in those of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical parishes, the suggestions made for the location of the 'three boundaries' are not unreasonable. Nevertheless, they cannot carry the same degree of certainty as do the clause's earlier references to major landscape features, such as the River Trent. The next four places mentioned in the boundary clause are also unidentified, and for similar reasons. These are the '*dic ende*' ('the end of the dyke'), the '*sceortan stane*' ('the short stone'), the '*ƿylle*' ('the stream') and the '*færdene*' ('the danger? valley'). The last boundary point described in the clause can, however, be located with certainty, as Darlaston's boundary was said to move '*of ðære dene þæt eft on trentan*' ('from the [unidentified] valley back again to the Trent').[47]

The land-unit described in the charter cannot therefore be shown to be of the same extent as the mid nineteenth-century township of Darlaston. This means that we

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[46] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 148; Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 87.
[47] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 178; Hooke (ed.), pp. 87-88.

do not know whether the one hide assigned to Darlaston in Eadwig's charter relates to the same piece of land as the three virgates (i.e. three quarters of a hide) recorded for Darlaston in Domesday Book.[48] Having said that, there are no signs that the boundary of the nineteenth-century township followed a wholly different course to that of the earlier land-unit, and, indeed, we can be certain that parts of the township's western and southern boundary of coincided with that described in the charter. This is in the sections which coincided with the River Trent and the Filly Brook. Thus, although the evidence of the charter's boundary clause is not sufficiently clear for the spatial relationship between the two land-units to be judged reliably, the likelihood that they were of the same or similar extent remains open.

The charter's hidage assessment is in fact recorded in an endorsement to William Salt 84/1/41, which is copied out in the same hand as that of the main body of the charter.[49] The endorsement includes an unexplained reference to another hide of land at *Stapulforda*, which Cyril Hart feels was 'evidently a detached portion of the [Darlaston] estate having its own separate bounds which are not given in the charter'. He confidently identified *Stapuforda* as Stableford, located five miles north-west of Darlaston, and surmised that the area in question comprised the 'modern' parishes of Chapel Chorlton and Hill Chorlton.[50] Hart did not explain the basis of this view, although it may be because Stableford is situated between the modern settlements of Chapel and Hill Chorlton.[51] But since Stableford makes no appearance in Domesday Book, the one hide assigned to *Stapulforda* in the charter is of little use for comparing to hidage assessments recorded for Staffordshire manors in 1086.

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[48] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 4,6.
[49] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 174; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 17, p. 26.
[50] Hart, *The Early Charters*, pp. 176-77.
[51] *Stapulforda* is derived from OE *stapol* ('stake', 'post', 'pillar') and OE *ford* ('ford'). The identification of *Stapulforda* as Stableford is accepted by David Horovitz: D. Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 505.

3.3.3 Edgar's charter concerning Madeley [S 801 (BCS 1312)]

This charter, dated 975, concerns a grant of three hides at Madeley, near to the Staffordshire-Cheshire border, made by King Edgar. It is viewed as authentic, and may, indeed, survive in its original form.[52] An assessment of just one hide is recorded for Madeley in Domesday Book, which could indicate that an adjustment had been made to Madeley's hidage rating between 975 and 1086.[53] Unfortunately the charter's boundary clause has proved difficult to solve, and fieldwalking will once again be necessary before further progress can be made. Two solutions have been offered in print, once again by Cyril Hart and Della Hooke. Both have argued that the boundary clause establishes the location of the place named as *Madanlieg* in the charter as Madeley in North-West Staffordshire. This is mainly because of the appearance of a boundary point called *wriman forda*, which shares the first element of its name with that of the modern name Wrinehill, located two miles north-west of Madeley.[54] While Hart asserted that the boundaries defined in the charter were almost identical with those of Madeley parish, Hooke was far less confident in identifying the points named

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[52] Cyril Hart listed S 801 as an authentic original document. Knowles, Brook and London say that it is 'almost certainly genuine': Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 88, p. 95; D. Knowles, C.N.L. Brooke & V.C.M. London (eds), *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales: Volume I, 940-1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 2001), p. 126.

[53] There are two entries in the Staffordshire Domesday folios identified as Madeley which are both rendered as *Madelie* within the Domesday text and held by Robert of Stafford in 1086. The first, assessed at one hide, is usually identified as the Madeley of S 801, and the second, assessed at half a hide and one and a half carucates, is dentified as Madeley Holme in North-East Staffordshire. These identifications have presumably been based on the positions of the two entries within the Domesday text: the entry associated with the Madeley of S 801, is 'sandwiched' between two places ilocated n the north-west of the shire (Norton-in-the-Moors and Abbey Hulton), whereas the entry thought to relate to Madeley Holme is positioned between two entries relating to places in North-East Staffordshire (Caverswall and Bramshall). This seems to be the most sensible way of interpreting the two Domesday entries because many entries in the Staffordshire Domesday folios are ordered in a 'geographically coherent' way. Nevertheless, since the forms of both entries are identical we need to keep in mind the possibility that both relate to the same manor, which would thus carry a combined 'tax' assessment of three hides in 1086: DB, f. 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 11,20 & 11,37. For further discussion of the ordering of entries in the Staffordshire Domesday folios: Chapter 2.3, pp. 39-40.

[54] Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 88, p. 95; Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 106. This is accepted by David Horovitz: Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 593. Wrinehill's name is complex and Horovitz argues that it may be derived from the OE verb *wrigian*, 'to tend, to go forward, to bend'): *ibid.*

in the charter's boundary clause, and left the majority unsolved.[55] Consequently, we do not know whether the hidage assessments recorded in the charter and in Domesday Book relate to land-units of generally the same extent.

3.3.4 Archbishop Sigeric's confirmation of Wulfrun's grant to the church of Wolverhampton [S 1380]

This charter, dated 996, concerns a grant of 30 hides made by a certain Wulfrun to the church of Wolverhampton.[56] It survives as a seventeenth-century copy, which is either viewed either as trustworthy, or as spurious but with an authentic document of the 990s underlying it. Doubts about its authenticity stem from the facts that it is dated 996 but Sigeric ended his term of office in 994, and that the witness list contains certain anachronisms.[57]

The 30 hides recorded in the charter relate to a number of land-units in South Staffordshire. These are Upper Arley, *Eswich* (usually identified as Ashwood in Kinver Forest), Bilston, Willenhall, Wednesfield, Pelsall, *Ogintun* (perhaps Ogley Hay, near Cannock), Hilton (near Shenstone), Hatherton, Kinvaston, Hilton (near Wolverhampton) and Featherstone. Unfortunately, we are unable to compare directly the hidage total for individual land-units named with those recorded in Domesday Book because the charter does not record how its 30 hides were distributed among the places named within it.[58] It is, however, possible to compare the total figure of 30

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[55] Hart, *The Early Charters*, pp. 95-97; Hooke, *The Landscape*, pp. 106-09.
[56] This church is discussed in Chapter 7.8.1.
[57] H.P.R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1961), no. 331, pp. 124-25; Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 90, p. 97. S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready' 978-1016: A Study in Their Use as Historical Evidence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 104, n. 62 & 252. Knowles, Brooke and London list the charter as 'doubtful, but prob. a genuine base': Knowles, Brooke & London (eds), *The Heads*, p. 238.
[58] W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum: A New Edition, Edited by J. Caley, Sir Henry Ellis and the Rev. B. Bandinel Volume VI Part I* (London: T.G. March, 1849), pp. 1443-46. A translation is printed in Bridgeman (ed.), 'Staffordshire', pp. 105-10.

hides to the total number of hides assigned by Domesday Book to the places in question, as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: Domesday hidage values for the places named in S 1380

Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs*. reference	**Place**	**Domesday hidage value**
7,2	Upper Arley	2 + ½[59]
7,6	*Haswich* (Ashwood?)	5
1,4	Bilston	2
7,7	Wednesfield	5
7,8	Willenhall	2
7,9	Pelsall	½
7,9	Hilton (near Shensone)	3 vigates (¾ hide)
7,10	*Hocintune* (Ogley Hay?)	1
7,13	Hathertone	3
7,14	Kinvaston	1
7,15	Hilton (near Wolverhampton)	2
7,16	Featherstone	1
Total hides:	including *Hocintune*: excluding *Hocintune*:	**25¾** **24¾**

According to the above calculation, the Domesday hidage total was around five hides lower than the one recorded in the charter. But a number of obscurities in the evidence of the charter and Domesday Book limit the extent to which a meaningful comparison can be drawn between the hidage ratings recorded in the two sources.

Firstly, the locations of the charter's land-unit called *Eswich* and of the Domesday manor named *Haswic* are uncertain, although both are usually associated with Ashwood, in Kinver Forest, situated around a mile and a half west of modern Kingswinford.[60] The section of the charter's boundary clause that relates to *Eswich* is yet to be satisfactorily solved, but its reference to the '*sture*' (the River Stour), which

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[59] Domesday Book records that while the Canons of Wolverhampton held land at Upper Arley worth two hides in 1086, a further half hide belonged to this land that had been forcibly taken from the canons by a certain Osbern, son of Richard: DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs*., 7,2. Upper Arley may also be mentioned in a charter dated 963 concerning *Ernlege* and *Duddestone*: S 720 (BCS 1100); Finberg, *The Early Charters*, no. 287, pp. 111-12; Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 57, pp. 79-80; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 20, pp. 32-33. Ekwall, however, identified the place named in S 720 as Arley, Warwickshire: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 4th edn, 1960), p. 12. Identification is hampered by the extant charter having no boundary clause, and it is therefore uncertain how, if at all, the three hides recorded in S 720 for *Ernlege* relate to the two and a half hides assigned to Upper Arley in Domesday Book.

[60] Bridgeman (ed.), 'Staffordshire', pp. 111-12; Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 90, p. 97; Hooke, *The Landscape*, pp. 66 & 70-73.

ran through Kingswinford parish in the nineteenth century, supports the view that *Eswich* was located in this area.[61] The facts that both *Eswich* and *Haswich* were associated with the church of Wolverhampton and that the both names are derived from the same Old English words (*æsc* ('ash') and *wic*), makes it seems likely that both names relate to the same place.[62] But while this means that the five hides assigned to *Haswich* in Domesday Book can justifiably be included in Table 7's calculation, without knowing *Eswich*'s hidage rating at the time of Wulfrun's grant, we do not know whether that assessment had been altered between the late tenth century and 1086. Indeed, until *Eswich*'s boundary statement is solved, there is no way of telling whether the charter's *Eswich* and Domesday Book's *Haswich* relate to a land-unit of the same extent.

The place named *Ogintun* in the charter presents similar difficulties. *Ogintun* is usually identified as Ogley Hay, part of Cannock Chase in the early nineteenth century, although none of the boundary points recorded in the relevant section of the charter's boundary clause have been positively identified.[63] Consequently, even if the place named as *Ogintun* in the charter and *Hocintune* in Domesday Book relate to Ogley Hay, there is no way of judging whether Ogley Hay's boundaries remained unchanged between the 990s and 1086. Moreover, Frank Thorn has expressed doubts about whether the modern name 'Ogley Hay' is derived from the Domesday form *Hocintune* at all. Conversely, David Horovitz sees no reason to doubt that *Hocintune*, *Ogintun* and modern Ogley Hay are all derived from an Old English personal name Hocca, Occa, Ocga or Ogga. In this case the name's present second element, which is derived from *leah* ('woodland' or 'woodland clearing'), would have replaced the

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[61] For the course of the Stour: *ibid.*, p. 70; LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Kingswinford (1839).
[62] Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 93.
[63] Hooke, *The Landscape*, pp. 67 & 76-79. For the nineteenth-century situation: W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1834), p. 106.

earlier *tūn* ('farmstead', 'estate') in the post-Domesday period.[64] But since *Hocintue* was assigned only one hide in Domesday Book its inclusion within or exclusion from Table 7 makes little difference to the late eleventh-century hidage total for the land-units named in Wulfrun's charter.

Very little can also be said reliably about the late tenth-century extents of Hatherton and Willenhall. This is because the majority of the boundary points in Hatherton's section of the boundary clause are at present unidentified, and the charter includes no boundary statement at all for Willenhall.[65] Thus, although the hidage totals recorded in the charter and Domesday Book once again provide grounds for thinking that adjustments may have been made to 'tax' assessments in Staffordshire between the late tenth century and 1086, accurately assessing the spatial relationship between the land-units named in the charter and Domesday Book presents numerous problems. We therefore do not know whether the hidage totals recorded in both sources relates to land of generally the same extent.

3.3.5 Æthelred II's charter concerning Abbot's Bromley [S 878]

This charter is dated 996 and concerns a grant of three hides at Abbot's Bromley, situated around ten miles east of Stafford. The charter is viewed as trustworthy and survives in two manuscripts, the earlier of which is thought to be either an authentic original or an early eleventh-century copy.[66] The hidage total recorded in the charter

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[64] F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in [no named ed.] *The Staffordshire Domesday* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1991), p. 26; Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 418.
[65] Hooke, *The Landscape*, pp. 66-67, 78-82.
[66] The earlier of the two manuscripts is WSL 84/4/41. Hart argues that it was probably an early eleventh-century copy, but Sawyer says that it is 'probably authentic'. More recently Simon Keynes has argued that 'there seems no reason to suspect that the charter is anything other than an original': Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 91, pp. 98 & 204; Keynes (ed.), *Facsimiles*, p. 5; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 27, p. 48.

is significantly higher than that of Domesday Book, which assigns just half a hide to Abbot's Bromley.[67]

This charter's boundary clause is contemporary with the main body of the charter's text, as the whole document is copied out in a single hand. Much of the course of the boundary described within it has also been solved with confidence.[68] This is because the boundary of the Anglo-Saxon land-unit coincides on three sides with easily identifiable rivers or other watercourses: the Pur Brook in the east, which appears as '*pire broc*' in the charter; the Little Blithe in the south, which occurs in the charter as '*bliðe*'; and the Tad Brook in the west, which is called '*ceabbe broc*' in the charter.[69] But the section of the boundary clause relating to the northern part of the Anglo-Saxon land-unit has yet to be solved because many of the boundary points mentioned, mainly unnamed roads, are yet to be identified.[70] Nevertheless, the boundary described in the charter does reflect that of the nineteenth-century parish of Abbot's Bromley on three sides, which coincided with the Pur Brook in the east, the Little Blithe in the south, and the Tad Brook in the west.[71] On this occasion we can therefore be more than usually confident that the layout of the land-unit described in

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[67] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 4,5.

[68] Hart, *The Early Charters*, p. 204.

[69] Hart, *The Early Charters*, pp. 206-07; Hooke, *The Landscape*, pp. 88-91; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 27, p. 48. Sawyer has doubted the equation of *ceabbe broc* with the Tad Brook, but Horovitz accepts it as plausible: Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 528; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 27, p.48. In favour of this identification is the fact that the Tad Brook is a tributary of the Little Blithe and the charter records that Abbot's Bromley's boundary ran '*up æfter bliþe oð hit cyme in ceabbe broc*' ('up following the Blithe until it comes to *Ceabbe's* Brook'): Old English text: Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 27, p. 46; translation: Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 90. For the course of the Tad Brook: OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 43/02 (undated, *c.* 1947).

[70] Hooke, *The Landscape*, p. 90.

[71] The Tad Brook actually formed part of the western boundary of Bagots Bromley, a township within the ecclesiastical parish of Abbots Bromley. The antiquity of this division within Abbot's Bromley parish is not certain, although Bagots Bromley certainly had a separate identity by 1316, when it is recorded as *Bromileye Bagot* in Feudal Aids: *Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids Volume V: Stafford – Worcester* (London: HMSO, 1908), p. 12. For the course of the parish boundary: LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Abbot's Bromley (1847) and Bagot's Bromley (1848). The outline of the Abbot's Bromley's parish boundary is published in T. Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries of Staffordshire Volume I: Pirehill* (Barlaston: Malthouse Press, 2005), p. 3.

the charter may well reflect that of the Domesday manor of the same name, and therefore that Abbot's Bromley's hidage rating was reduced between 996 and 1086.

3.3.6 Æthelred II's charter concerning Rolleston [S 920]

Our final charter concerns an exchange of land at Aldsworth and Arlington (Gloucestershire) for two and a half hides of land at Rolleston, in South-East Staffordshire, between King Æthelred II and Wulfgeat, abbot of Burton. It is dated 1008 and survives in two thirteenth century copies, which are generally viewed as being trustworthy.[72]

Rolleston is assigned two and a half hides in Domesday Book, like in the charter.[73] Cyril Hart argues that 'the bounds of the 2½ hides at Rolleston can be shown to follow, with little variation, the bounds of the present-day parish'. This confidence, however, seems misplaced. Peter Sawyer, for example, feels that the large number of – admittedly unidentified – boundary points that appear between Dodslow, located near to the southern boundary of Rolleston's nineteenth-century parish, and the River Dove, which formed part of its eastern boundary, suggest that the bounds of the Anglo-Saxon land-unit extended a long way east of the present parish. Della Hooke was also cautious in her discussion of the boundary clause, and left many of the clause's boundary points entirely unidentified.[74] Consequently, there is at present no way of judging reliably the spatial relationship between the land-unit assessed at two and a half hides in the charter and the manor assigned two and a half hides in Domesday Book, although there are grounds for thinking that the two may have been of a different extent.

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[72] Finberg, *The Early Charters*, no. 149, p. 66; Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 93, p. 99; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 31, p. 60.
[73] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 10,3.
[74] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Rolleston (1838); Hart, *The Early Charters*, pp. 216-17; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, p. 60; Hooke, *The Landscape*, pp. 95-98.

3.4 Conclusions

In all but one of the six charters discussed above, the hidage total recorded in Domesday Book is lower than that recorded for the same place(s) in documents relating to the pre-Conquest period. The exception is Rolleston [S 920], which carries the same hidage assessment in its late Anglo-Saxon charter as in Domesday Book.

While this provides grounds for thinking that Staffordshire may have experienced a reduction in its hidage assessment between the late Anglo-Saxon period and 1086, the strength of the conclusions that can legitimately be drawn from this study are limited by two factors. Firstly, the corpus of charters that can be used to compare tenth- and eleventh-century hidage assessments with those of Domesday Book is very small, and so may not reflect general trends across the shire as a whole. And, secondly, the boundaries of the land-units recorded in the charters can rarely be reconstructed accurately. This means that it is rarely possible to judge reliably how far the hidage totals recorded in pre-Conquest charters relate to land-units that were similar in size in 1086. Indeed, only the boundary described in the Abbot's Bromley charter [S 878] has been reconstructed sufficiently fully for a meaningful comparison to be made with that area's early nineteenth-century parochial geography. In this case it was found that the extent of the land-unit described in the charter was probably identical on three sides to that of Abbot's Bromley parish, and therefore, arguably, of the Domesday manor of the same name. Yet such straightforward evidence is rare. Thus, while the available evidence suggests that the Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hidage assessment may be lower than the original assessment carried by the shire, it does not prove that there was a general reduction in the hidage ratings of Staffordshire manors between the tenth or early eleventh century and 1086. Nor, unfortunately, does the shire's pre-Conquest charter evidence explain why it carried a

relatively low hidage assessment at the time of Domesday Book. Nevertheless, it is likely that this resulted, at least in part, from Staffordshire incorporating a great deal of agriculturally marginal land, for instance in the north-east and north-west of the shire.[75]

It would therefore be easy to argue that the results of this chapter have been ultimately disappointing. But if a more complex analysis of shire origins in the West Midlands is to emerge it is essential that exercises of this sort are undertaken. Indeed, the chapter has demonstrated once again that our evidence for the origins of the West Midland shires is more difficult to interpret than is often acknowledged, and has provided some valuable insights. For instance, it suggests that assessing whether individual shires experienced a general reduction in their hidage assessments between the late Anglo-Saxon period and the time of Domesday Book may be more difficult than is usually argued. It has also shown that reconstructing the layout of late Anglo-Saxon land-units from the evidence of charter boundary clauses is less straightforward than some scholars suggest. But the charters surveyed above provide no grounds to think that the layout of certain early land-units cannot be recovered from modern sources in Staffordshire. Rather, it has been seen that continuity or discontinuity can rarely be demonstrated in this shire – although the cases of Abbot's Bromley and Darlaston demonstrate that ecclesiastical parish boundaries sometimes can be shown to coincide with those of earlier land-units, particularly when their boundaries followed prominent landscape features, such as major rivers.

[75] See Chapter 1.2, p. 3.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Introduction

It has already been seen that previous work on shire origins in the West Midlands has operated within two basic hypotheses. The first is that the region's shires were effectively created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in which there were no existing sub-provincial territories, or in one in which existing administrative territories were ignored when the shire boundaries were first laid out; the other is that the West Midland shires reflect pre-existing land-units, or represent the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units.[1]

This chapter will explore the relationship between the earliest discoverable course of Staffordshire's boundary and the natural landscape.[2] This exercise may throw new light on the shire's origins in a number of ways. If, for instance, it were to be found that Staffordshire was a wholly coherent territory in respect of its relationship with the natural landscape, such that the shire could be seen to represent an easily identifiable single natural region – as, for instance, would a shire be which comprised the drainage basin of a single river but nothing else – this would suggest that a close correspondence with the natural landscape may have been the most important criterion in determining the shire's geographical extent. Should, on the other hand, the shire's boundary follow a wholly random course in respect of its relationship to the area's natural topography, this would suggest that the natural landscape had little bearing on the course of its boundary, with the shire's extent primarily determined by other factors, perhaps on a 'blank slate'. Alternatively, if

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[1] See Chapter 1.

[2] H.P.R. Finberg has already undertaken a similar exercise for the boundary that divides Devon from Cornwall: H.P.R. Finberg, 'The Making of a Boundary', in W.G. Hoskins & H.P.R. Finberg (eds), *Devonshire Studies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952), pp. 19-39.

major landscape features appear to have been used whenever it was possible to do so, while the rest of the boundary joined up these lengths by the shortest or most straightforward routes, this might suggest that although desirable where possible, using such features for Staffordshire's boundary was not the only criterion that determined the shire's extent.

These three explanations are all alternatives within the first of our basic hypotheses for shire origins in the West Midlands. The chapter will therefore also assess how much can be said about the layout of the middle Anglo-Saxon territories in the Staffordshire area, and whether positive conclusions can be drawn about the spatial relationship between the extent of those territories and that of the shire.

4.2 Mapping the course of Staffordshire's boundary

It is not possible to map the course of Staffordshire's original boundary. Domesday Book provides the earliest glimpse of the shire's extent, but we do not know how many changes had been made to the shire's boundary between the time when Staffordshire was created and the end of the eleventh century. While we likewise do not know how long it took for the boundary of the shire to become stabilised, it appears to have done so by 1086 since we shall see that there are good reasons for thinking that relatively few changes were made to it between the late eleventh century and the mid nineteenth.[3]

First, though, it is necessary to explain the methodology used in this chapter to map the probable course of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary, and to investigate with what it coincided on the ground. Domesday Book does not describe the actual course of the shire's boundary in 1086, since it reveals only the names of

[3] Below, pp. 97-105.

the manors that were considered to be part of Staffordshire. In fact, the majority of the shire was not reliably and systematically mapped until the mid nineteenth century, and the maps which accompany the tithe awards of the 1830s, 40s and 50s show the earliest discoverable course of its boundary.[4] Much of Staffordshire's boundary was therefore mapped with reference to the boundaries delineated on the tithe maps, and checks with other sources, such as Trade Directories, were made to ensure that places apparently on the 'other side' of the county's nineteenth-century boundary really were considered to be part of neighbouring counties at that time.[5] But the tithe maps do not cover Staffordshire's boundary in its entirety: by the early nineteenth century tithes had already been apportioned in some parishes adjacent to its boundary – usually in parts of the county which had been subject to inclosure – and so late eighteenth- or early to mid-nineteenth-century inclosure maps were consulted in those sections of the boundary not included on the tithe maps.[6]

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[4] For further discussion of the tithe surveys: R.J.P. Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For discussion of the changes made to parish boundaries from the 1840s onwards: R.J.P. Kain & R.R. Oliver, *Historic Parishes of England and Wales: Electronic Map – Gazetteer – Metadata* (Colchester: History Data Service, 2001), pp. 7-8.

[5] One example should suffice. The tithe map for Ilam, in North-East Staffordshire, describes that place as being 'a Parish in the County of Stafford'. The eastern boundary of that parish coincides with Staffordshire's eastern boundary for several miles. To the east of Ilam were the parishes of Thorpe and Tissington, both of which were certainly considered to be part of Derbyshire in the nineteenth century, as they had been in 1086: LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Ilam (*c.*1844); *Pigot & Co.'s National Commercial Directory for 1828-29* (London: J. Pigot, 1828-29), pp. 107-08. For the situation in 1086: Domesday Book [hereafter DB], f. 272 & 274; P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Derbyshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978), 1,14 & 6,7.

[6] This was not possible in the township of Hollinsclough, part of the parish of Alstonefield in North-East Staffordshire, because the Hollinsclough section of the Alstonefield inclosure map was missing from Stafford Record Office. As a result the boundary had to be drawn from mid twentieth-century Ordnance Survey maps. There is little evidence, however, that this section of Staffordshire's boundary had altered much between the mid-nineteenth-century and the mid-twentieth: most of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary was marked by the River Dove, which the Hollinsclough section of the boundary followed in the 1940s. Furthermore, the twentieth-century boundary at Hollinsclough joined up with the one that can be discerned in the nineteenth-century inclosure and tithe maps for the neighbouring township of Quarnford to the north-west and the parish of Longnor to the south-east: SRO Q/RDc24, Inclosure Map for Alstonefield (1839); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 43/09 (undated *c.* 1949). The same is true for the township of Little Barr, part of Harborne parish, and situated in South-East Staffordshire, for which no tithe map exists and so was drawn with reference to the OS Old Series one-inch maps and the Index to the Tithe Survey edition of that series, both produced in the nineteenth century. For the Old Series in the Staffordshire area: *The Old Series Ordnance Survey Maps of England and Wales Volume VII: North-Central England* (Kent: Harry Margary, 1989).

There are, however, good reasons for believing that the boundary shown on nineteenth-century maps reflects the general course of Staffordshire's boundary in 1086. It has already been seen that an increasing body of evidence (albeit often relating to geographically distant places) indicates that the layout of certain early land-units can, in general terms, often be recovered from modern sources – although it is admittedly rarely possible to demonstrate beyond any doubt that any single section of Staffordshire's boundary followed exactly the same course in the nineteenth century as it had done in 1086.[7] For instance, numerous estate maps, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and relating to places close to Staffordshire's boundary survive. Unfortunately, however, it is rarely possible to use these maps to check whether that boundary had been much altered between then and the nineteenth century (and so be able to demonstrate continuity in its course, if only for a couple of centuries). This is because the primary concern of the estate maps was to delineate the extent of the estate with which they were concerned: in Staffordshire at least it was rare for other details to be included, such as where county, parish or township boundaries lay.[8] Besides, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many of the estates outlined on these maps straddled the county boundary, because the landowners in question possessed land in both Staffordshire and a neighbouring county.

On one occasion, however, at Rolleston, near Burton-on-Trent, it is possible to compare the county boundary shown on the tithe map with that delineated on an earlier map of the township of Rolleston. The county boundary followed precisely the same course on both maps – but we should perhaps not read too much into this fact

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[7] Such continuity can also rarely be demonstrated between the land-units described in late Anglo-Saxon charters relating to Staffordshire and nineteenth-century parochial arrangements, although there are no signs that it did not exist: Chapter 3.

[8] An example is a map relating to an unnamed estate at Ilam, which is depicted as a series of unconnected fields that are impossible to relate to the later human or physical landscape: WSL Fac. 107, Map of Unnamed Estate at Ilam (*c.* 1600).

seeing as only 30 years separated their production.[9] More useful in this respect is a map of Warwickshire produced in the early eighteenth century by Henry Beighton.[10] Although the map is on a very large scale and does not contain nearly the level of detail found on tithe maps, on the whole it shows that the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary had remained largely unchanged between the 1720s and the mid-nineteenth century.[11] Nevertheless, there are numerous gaps on Beighton's map where such continuity cannot be demonstrated, perhaps present in his map because Beighton did not know precisely where some sections of the boundary ran, or, more likely, because in places the boundary was so complex that it was impossible for it to be shown on such a large-scale map.[12]

But the most compelling reason for believing that there was a good degree of stability in Staffordshire's boundary between the late eleventh century and mid-nineteenth is that the overwhelming majority of places located close to the edge of Staffordshire in 1086 were still recorded as being part of the shire in thirteenth-century and later sources, while places on the 'other side' of the boundary were likewise associated with neighbouring shires throughout the late medieval period. The aforementioned Rolleston, for example, was part of Staffordshire in 1086 and

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[9] WSL 72/12/43 Map of the Township of Rolleston and Anslow in the Parish of Rolleston and of the Township of Callingwood in the Parish of Tatenhill (1807); LRO B/A/15 Tithe Map for Rolleston (1838).

[10] UoB [no reference number], Map of Warwickshire by Henry Beighton (*c.* 1722-25).

[11] Given the lack of detail on Beighton's map it is useful to outline the logic behind decisions made regarding the degree of correlation between the early eighteenth- and mid-nineteenth-century Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary, although one example, relating to the parish of Shenstone, will have to suffice. In the vicinity of Shenstone, Beighton shows Hill Hook [SK 106006], Bracebridge Pool [SP 098981] and Rowton's Cottage [SP 092968] as being just to the east of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary (i.e. in Warwickshire) in the early eighteenth century. He also shows the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary running south-westwards in a straight line just west of Bracebridge Pool. This corresponds well to the situation in the mid nineteenth century: at this time Hill Hook, Bracebridge Pool and Rowton's Cottage were still all located to the east of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary, in the parish of Sutton Coldfield. The county boundary likewise ran south-westwards in a straight line for a short distance in the vicinity of Bracebridge Pool (along the modern B 4198, which partly reflects the course of Ryknild Street): LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Shenstone (1838); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheets SK 10 & SP 09 (1951).

[12] One such notable omission is in the vicinity of Tamworth, which is discussed in more detail below, p. 111.

likewise considered to be part of that shire during the reign of Henry III (1216-1272). It was certainly also in Staffordshire in both 1316 and 1334, and is still part of the county today.[13] Similarly, Sheen, located in North-East Staffordshire, was said to be part of that shire in 1086 and 1334 and the eastern boundary of Sheen parish coincided with the boundary between Derbyshire and Staffordshire in the mid nineteenth century.[14] Indeed, the sheer number of places located close to Staffordshire's boundary where such continuity can be shown is striking, and strongly suggests that the line of the boundary was essentially unchanged between 1086 and the mid nineteenth century.[15]

This degree of continuity cannot, however, be demonstrated in all sections of the shire's boundary. For example, Domesday Book's evidence for South-West Staffordshire is so opaque that it is impossible to tell whether some manors in this area were considered to be part of Staffordshire or Warwickshire in 1086. The confusion surrounds a group of eight adjacent manors held by Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, or his son, Hugh, in 1086. These are Alveley, Claverley, Kingsnordley, Quatt, Romsley, Rudge, Shipley and Worfield, which later comprised the parishes or townships of Alveley, Claverley, Quatt, Quatford, Rudge and Worfield, as illustrated on Map 14. At some point after the compilation of Domesday Book they were all transferred to Shropshire, where they were to remain until the present day. Given that this block of land adjoined manors also held by the Montgomerys that can be assigned with confidence to Shropshire in 1086, it seems

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[13] DB, f. 248; A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976) [hereafter *DB: Staffs.*], 10,3; S. Shaw, *The History & Antiquities of Staffordshire Volume I: Introduction by M.W. Greenslade & G.C. Baugh* (Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1976 [originally published 1798-1801]), p. xvi; *Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids Volume V: Stafford-Worcester* (London: HMSO, 1908) [hereafter *Feudal Aids*], p. 15; R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 280.

[14] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,51; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 281; LRO B/A/15 Tithe Map for Sheen (*c.* 1847).

[15] The data upon which this statement is based is set out in Appendix 2 which shows the hundredal affiliations of manors in Domesday Book and later sources.

likely that the transfer occurred at the behest of that family, and resulted from a desire to consolidate as much of their land as possible within that shire. In this case the eight manors had probably become part of Shropshire by 1102, when the Montgomerys forfeited their earldom.[16]

It is usually assumed that all eight manors were part of Staffordshire in 1086.[17] But only four of the manors in question (Alveley, Kingsnordley, Claverley and Worfield) actually appear in the Staffordshire Domesday folios; the others form part of Earl Roger of Montgomery's holdings in the Warwickshire folios. Most scholars, however, agree that the 'Warwickshire' manors (i.e. Quatt, Romsley, Rudge and Shipley) were actually part of Staffordshire at the time, the implication being that they were included in the Warwickshire folios by the Domesday scribe in error, who subsequently forgot, or neglected, to indicate that these manors were really within Staffordshire.[18] Although the basis of this view is not explained, it is probably because had Quatt, Romsley, Rudge and Shipley been part of Warwickshire in 1086 the result would be an unusually complex shire landscape in this area, with small detached 'pockets' of Warwickshire being surrounded by areas that belonged to Staffordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. Such a situation would not, it seems, suit our desire for the picture presented by Domesday Book to be always neat and tidy.

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[16] See: J.F.A. Mason, 'Roger de Montgomery and his Sons (1067-1102)', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 13 (1963), pp. 20-22.

[17] For example: R.W. Eyton, *Domesday Studies: An Analysis and Digest of the Staffordshire Survey* (London: Trubner, 1881), pp. 2-3; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, EW1-EW4; C.F. Slade, 'Introduction to the Staffordshire Domesday', in L.M. Midgley (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume IV* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 1; J. Tait, 'Introduction to the Shropshire Domesday', in W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Shropshire Volume I* (London: Archibald Constable, 1908), p. 286; J.C. Wedgwood, 'Early History Staffordshire', *The William Salt Archaeological Society: Collections for a History of Staffordshire* [hereafter *SHC*], 1916, p. 163.

[18] For the 'Staffordshire' manors: DB f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 8,1-8,3 & 9,1. For the 'Warwickshire' manors: DB, f. 239; J. Plaister (ed.), *Domesday Book: Warwickshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976) [hereafter *DB: Warwicks.*], 12,8-12,11. See the notes of both Phillimore volumes for the belief that the places named in the Warwickshire Domesday folios were in fact part of Staffordshrie in 1086.

But the fact that Domesday Book assigns the four manors to Warwickshire means that the possibility that they really were part of that shire cannot be discounted. In a similar case, concerning Lapley, which is situated around seven miles south-west of Stafford, the situation is more straightforward. Although Lapley's entry is within the Northamptonshire Domesday folios, there are no strong grounds for thinking that Lapley was a detached 'island' of Northamptonshire in 1086. This is because its entry appears directly under a heading for the – Staffordshire – hundred of Cuttlestone, and it was considered to be part of Staffordshire in the late Middle Ages, for instance in 1255, 1316 and 1334.[19] The consecutive entries of Quatt, Romsley, Rudge and Shipley, however, are listed under the heading for the Warwickshire hundred of Stoneleigh, being separated from that rubric by the entry for Wolston.[20] The late medieval picture is also of little help to us here, since it only adds to our confusion. In 1130, for instance, part of Quatt seems to have been regarded as being within Warwickshire, although three years earlier it was said to have been within Staffordshire, a situation which, Jane Croom argues, may indicate that the course of the shire boundary in this area 'was somewhat fluid'.[21] She also suggests that if the four manors really were once part of Warwickshire, this situation must have been made for the convenience of a pre-Domesday landholder or landholders.[22]

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[19] DB, f. 222; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Northamptonshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1979), 16,1; *Rotuli Hundredorum temp Hen. III and Edw. I Volume I* (London: The Record Commission, 1818), p. 114; *Feudal Aids*, p. 16; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 282. The fact that Staffordshire and Northamptonshire are usually considered to have been within the same Domesday circuit arguably makes it seem more likely still that the Domesday scribe placed the entry for Lapley within Northamptonshire folios by mistake. For Domesday circuits: D. Roffe, *Domesday: The Inquest and the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 125-26; *idem*, *Decoding Domesday* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), pp. 72-74; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn, 'The Writing of Great Domesday Book', in E. Hallam & D. Bates (eds), *Domesday Book* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), p. 43.

[20] DB, f. 239; Plaister (ed.), *DB: Warwicks.*, 12,7.

[21] J.N. Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval and Medieval Human Landscape and Settlement Pattern of South-East Shropshire' (unpublished University of Birmingham PhD thesis, 1989), p. 312.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 314.

On the other hand, the listing of Quatt, Romsley, Rudge and Shipley under a Stoneleigh heading does not prove that they were detached sections of that hundred in 1086, and so were part of Warwickshire at that time. The Domesday scribe left a small space near the end of the first line of the third of the entries in question, that for Rudge, in the place where he sometimes placed a hundredal rubric in the Staffordshire and Warwickshire folios, and where he had placed the heading for Stoneleigh hundred in the aforementioned entry for Wolston.[23] This could mean that the first two manors in question (Quatt and Romsley) were part of the Warwickshire hundred of Stoneleigh in 1086, whereas the other two (Rudge and Shipley) were considered to be within a different Warwickshire hundred – or even a Staffordshire one – at the time. Alternatively it could mean nothing more than the scribe left a space at the end of the first line of Rudge's entry.

Had all eight of the manors really been part of Staffordshire at the end of the eleventh century they would have formed a relatively topographically coherent block of land, the western limits of which were marked almost exclusively by the River Severn in the nineteenth century.[24] Ultimately, however, since it is impossible to assign the four 'Warwickshire' manors to any shire in 1086, the possibility that the layout of shires in this area was unusually complex in 1086 should not be discounted (although finding a context to explain such a situation is admittedly difficult). Indeed, this demonstrates once again that interpreting Domesday Book's evidence for Staffordshire can be less straightforward than is often acknowledged.

There are also problems in discerning the precise Domesday shire geography of the Dudley area. In 1086 Dudley was part of Worcestershire, and, indeed, was a detached 'island' of that shire in the late Middle Ages, surrounded by the

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[23] DB, f. 239; Plaister (ed.), *DB Warwicks.*, 12,10.

[24] In the nineteenth century, however, a small section of Quatford township extended to the western side of the Severn: SA PF225/2/1, Tithe Map for Quatford (1846).

Staffordshire parishes or townships of Sedgley and Tipton to the north, Kingswinford to the west and south, and Rowley Regis to the east and south.[25] Although Dudley was certainly part of Worcestershire in 1086, it is unclear whether Dudley was also then a detached 'island' of that shire (as it is often depicted on maps of Domesday Staffordshire), because Rowley Regis's late eleventh-century shire affiliation is uncertain.[26]

There is no Domesday entry for Rowley. This, in itself, does not make assigning it to a shire self-evidently problematic: because a good degree of stability in Staffordshire's boundary between 1086 and the nineteenth century can, on the whole, be demonstrated, it is usually reasonable to believe that places close to Staffordshire's boundary that are not named in Domesday Book were nevertheless part of the shire in the late eleventh century. But Rowley's position is complicated by the fact that it was part of Clent's parish in the later Middle Ages.[27] Although Clent appears in the Worcestershire Domesday folios, its entry records that '*hui' M' firma iiii lib' reddit' in SVINESFORD In Stadfordscire*' ('the revenue of this manor, £4, is paid in Kingswinford in Staffordshire').[28] This situation probably accounts for why, by the reign of Henry II (1154-89), Clent had been transferred to Staffordshire, where it was to remain until 1832, when it was returned to Worcestershire.[29] This was not the only case of such a transfer in the area: although Tardebigge, located approximately seven miles south-east of Clent, was part of Worcestershire in 1086, it was subsequently

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[25] DB, f. 177; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Worcestershire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982) [hereafter *DB: Worcs.*], 23,10.
[26] For example: H.C. Darby & I.B. Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1971), p. 166.
[27] F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England Volume II: Northern England* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1991), p. 420.
[28] A similar thing is said by Domesday Book of Tardebigge: DB, f. 172; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Worcs.*, 1,4-1,6.
[29] H.M. Light in J.W. Willis-Bund (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Worcester Volume III* (London: Dawsons, 1971 [originally published in 1913]), p. 33, n. 8 & pp. 50 & 51, n. 16; O.M. Moger in *ibid.*, p. 3; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Worcs.*, Appendix I; Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 405 & 408.

transferred to Staffordshire, remaining in that shire until 1266 when it was moved to Warwickshire; Halesowen, on the other hand, was also part of Worcestershire in 1086, but, along with the part of Warley known as Warley Salop, was later transferred to Shropshire.[30] But as far as this study is concerned, the post-1086 connection between Rowley Regis and Clent raises the possibility that Rowley was part of Worcestershire at the time of Domesday Book, but, along with Clent, was transferred to Staffordshire by the end of the twelfth century (rather than being part of Staffordshire in 1086, as it was in the late Middle Ages).[31]

Finally, David Horovitz has recently proposed that there may have been some post-Domesday changes to Staffordshire's boundaries in the north of the shire, for 'some parts of the north of [Staffordshire lying at] some distance from the border may have been in Cheshire in the twelfth and thirteenth century [sic]'. He notes that in 1185 property at Leek was listed with the Earl of Cheshire's farms and argues that 'other references a century or so later suggest an earlier association of Leek and adjoining areas with Cheshire'.[32] This association, however, sounds as if it was manorial or socio-economic in nature, rather than administrative, and so would have no impact on shire membership. Indeed, even if Leek had, for unknown reasons, been transferred to Cheshire by the late twelfth century, such a connection was relatively short-lived. The manor of *Lec* formed part of King William's holdings within Staffordshire in 1086, and Leek was certainly considered to be part of Staffordshire from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century onwards (for example, being associated with the shire in sources dating from 1272x1307, 1316 and 1334).[33]

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[30] Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Worcs.*, Appendix I.
[31] As, for instance, it was in 1284-85: *Feudal Aids*, p. 9.
[32] Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 7.
[33] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,21; G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Plea Rolls *temp.*Henry III: Suits Affecting Staffordshire Tenants taken from the Plea Rolls of the Reign of Henry III., and

These problems notwithstanding, it seems very likely that, for the most part, Staffordshire's boundary remained fairly stable between the late eleventh century and the mid nineteenth. This is because, firstly, the overwhelming majority of places assigned to Staffordshire by Domesday Book are also associated with that shire in later medieval and modern sources; and, secondly, an increasing body of evidence (albeit often relating to geographically distant places) indicates that the remnants of early systems of landscape organisation can often be recovered from modern sources. That is to say, if we take into account discoverable changes made to Staffordshire's boundary between 1086 and the nineteenth century, there are good reasons for thinking that Staffordshire's boundary in 1086 corresponds sufficiently closely to the one that appears on mid-nineteenth-century maps for meaningful conclusions to be drawn from the latter's course.

4.3 The course of Staffordshire's boundary and the natural landscape

The course of Staffordshire's boundary will not be described in every particular as such a description would be unnecessarily long. Instead, the essential features of the boundary's course will be set out and some of its more problematic or complicated sections discussed. It is important to remember that this exercise may, by its nature, prioritise the situation in Staffordshire over that in neighbouring shires: i.e. assessing what light the relationship between Staffordshire's earliest discoverable boundary and the natural landscape throws on the shire's origins could make it seem like decisions regarding the course of that boundary were taken with reference to Staffordshire alone. Such a situation is unlikely because presumably no West Midland shire was created in isolation, and without reference to any other, if all the region's shire towns

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Abstracted into English', *SHC*, 4.1 (1883), p. 17; *Feudal Aids*, p. 13; Glasscock (ed.), *Lay Subsidy*, p. 281.

were to be provided with coherent or manageable territories. But without a similarly detailed study of all the shires that neighbour Staffordshire this danger is unavoidable. Nevertheless, assessing what can be said about the spatial relationship between Staffordshire and pre-existing administrative territories in the area should help to place the discussion of its boundary within a wider context.

4.3.1 Staffordshire and Cheshire

Moving clockwise, the boundary shared between Staffordshire and Cheshire began in the north-west of the shire in the parish of Madeley and ended in Quarnford, the most northerly township of the extensive parish of Alstonefield. Although partly marked by major rivers, the Staffordshire-Cheshire boundary does not follow any single natural topographical feature, nor does its course suggest that Staffordshire represented an easily identifiable single natural region. Nor, however, does it follow a wholly random course in respect of its relationship to the area's natural topography. The course of the Staffordshire-Cheshire boundary is shown on Maps 8 and 9.

From Madeley [at National Grid Reference SJ 745446], the Staffordshire-Cheshire boundary initially ran over relatively flat ground, mainly following field boundaries in the nineteenth century, and so was not marked by any major natural landscape features (of which there are none in this area). The boundary did, however, use tributaries of the River Weaver for around two miles in Madeley parish, and also the Dean Brook, another a tributary of the Weaver, for just over a mile in Balterley parish. The River Weaver ultimately flowed into the Mersey, and so here Staffordshire fell within the Mersey's drainage basin.[34]

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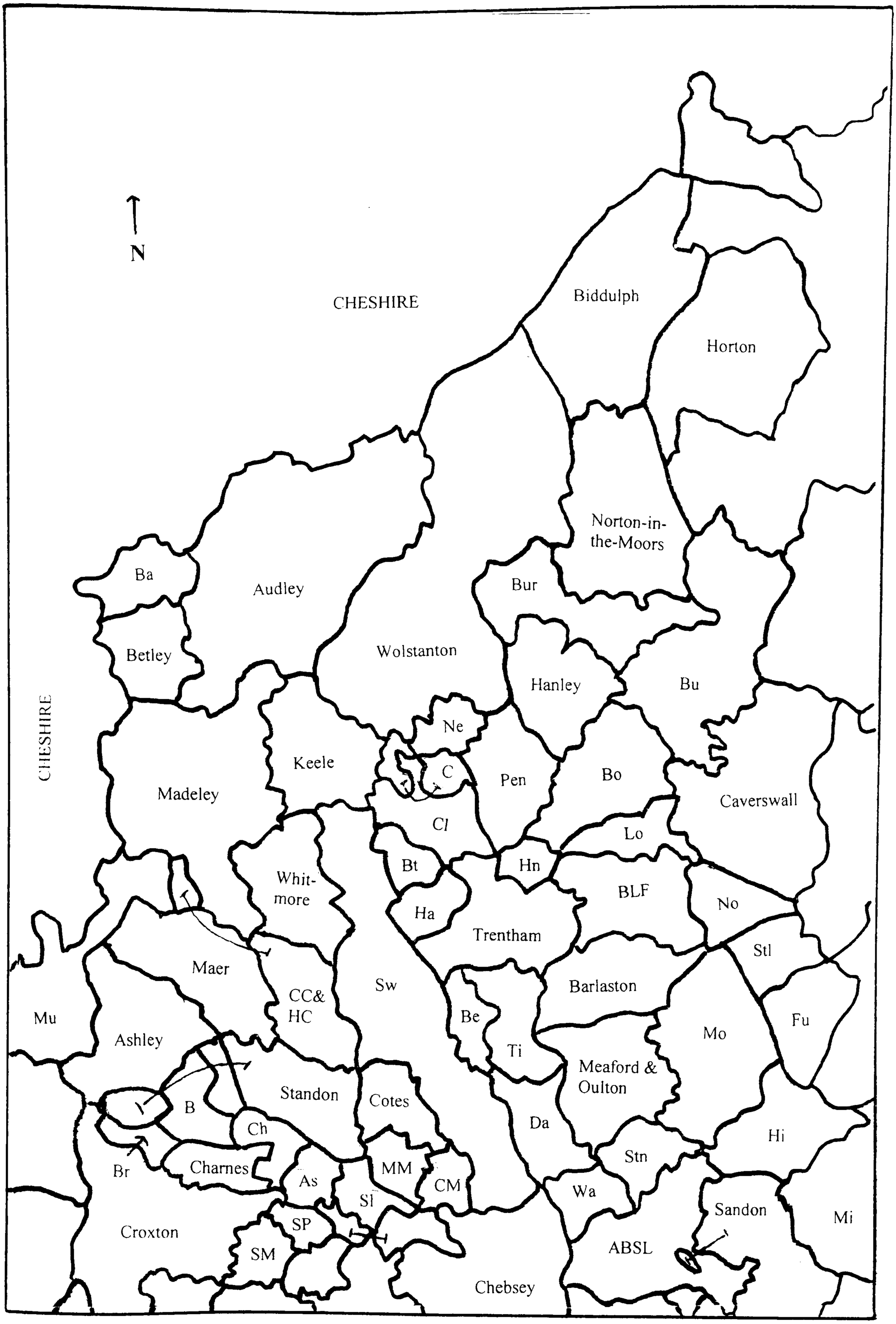
[34] The Weaver now flows into the Manchester ship canal. For the course of Staffordshire's boundary: LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Madeley (1840), Betley (1842), Balterley (1841), and Audley (1838); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheets 33/74 (1948), SJ 75 (1967) and SJ 85 (1967).

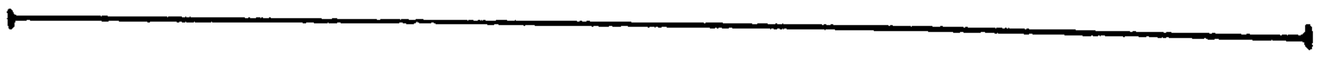


Map 8: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: north-west.
Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

Key to Map 8

Scale



0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

ABSL	Aston, Burston, Stoke and Little Aston
As	Aspley
B	Bromley
Ba	Balterley
Be	Beech
BLF	Blurton and Lightwood Forest
Bo	Botteslow, Fenton Vivian and Fenton Culvert
Br	Broughton
Bu	Bucknall, Bagnall and Eaves
Bur	Burslem
Bt	Butterton
C	Clayton Griffith
Ch	Chatcull
CC&HC	Chapel Chorlton and Hill Chorlton
Cl	Clayton and Seabridge
CM	Cold Meece
Da	Darlaston
Fu	Fulford
Ha	Hanchurch
Hi	Hilderstone
Hn	Hanford
Lo	Longton and Lane End
Mi	Milwich
MM	Mill Meece
Mo	Moddershall
Mu	Mucklestone
Ne	Newcastle-under-Lyme
No	Normacot
P	Podmore
Pe	Pershall
Pen	Penkhull and Boothen
Sl	Slindon
SM	Sugnall Magna
SP	Sugnall Parva
Stl	Stallington
Stn	Stone
Sw	Swynnerton
Ti	Tittensor
Wa	Walton

The boundary began to run over higher ground in Wolstanton parish, i.e. ground generally 500 or more feet above sea level. Thereafter it made use of major natural topographical features such as Mow Cop, Congleton Edge and The Cloud for approximately three miles, at the same time coinciding with the western and northern boundaries of Biddulph and Leek parishes. (The Cloud is around 1,000 feet above sea level, and Mow Cop and Congleton Edge form a ridge of high ground over 700 feet high, which divides the drainage basins of the Rivers Trent and Mersey.) We know that at least part of this section of the boundary was formally established at a relatively late date. Writing in the early nineteenth century, the Cheshire antiquarian George Ormerod recorded that on 'the border line separating Cheshire from Staffordshire are the megalithic remains known as "The Bridestone" [SJ 905625], which were formerly claimed as being within . . . Biddulph [Staffordshire]; but some years ago were enclosed from the open common as belonging to Buglawton [Cheshire].'[35] The boundary then dropped to the River Dane, another tributary of the Weaver, which marked the boundary between Staffordshire and Cheshire for several miles [between SJ 913652 and SK 009685] until Three Shires Head, where the boundaries of Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire still converge.[36] Here the boundary between Staffordshire and Cheshire ended and that between Staffordshire and Derbyshire began.

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[35] G. Ormerod, *The History of the Palatine and City of Chester . . . Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged by Thomas Helsby: Volume III Part I* (London: George Routledge, 1882 [originally published *c.* 1819]), p. 43.

[36] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Biddulph (1840), SRO Q/RDc39, Estate Map for Rushton Spencer (1777), SRO Q/RDc24, Inclosure Map for Alstonefield (1839); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheets SJ 85 (1967), 33/86 (undated, *c.* 1948), SJ 96 (1958), 43/06 (undated, *c.* 1949).

4.3.2 Staffordshire and Derbyshire

Still moving clockwise, the boundary between Staffordshire and Derbyshire ran from the township of Quarnford, part of Alstonefield parish, to the parish of Clifton Campville. Most of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary coincided with major rivers, but once again its course gives no grounds for thinking either that Staffordshire represented an easily identifiable single natural region, or that its boundary followed a wholly random course in respect of its relationship to the area's natural topography. The course of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary is shown on Maps 9, 10 and 11.

The first section of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary, however, did not coincide with any natural or man-made topographical feature. Instead, in the nineteenth century it ran in two straight lines, south-westwards and then south-eastwards, from Staffordshire's extreme northern tip [at SK 025698], each line approximately half a mile in length. Nothing marked this section of the boundary on the ground at that time except occasional boundary stones, and in some places not even those. This situation may, however, be explained by the agriculturally marginal nature of this part of Staffordshire. The boundary may have been stabilised at a much later date here than elsewhere in the shire, perhaps even as late as the eighteenth or nineteenth century, as we know was the case at Biddulph and Buglawton, also an agriculturally marginal area. Indeed, this should perhaps be envisaged as being historically something of a 'liminal' area between Derbyshire and Staffordshire – the straight course of the boundary on the ground being partially indicative of a lack of natural or man-made features, and partly as a result of there being relatively little interest in its meagre resources.[37]

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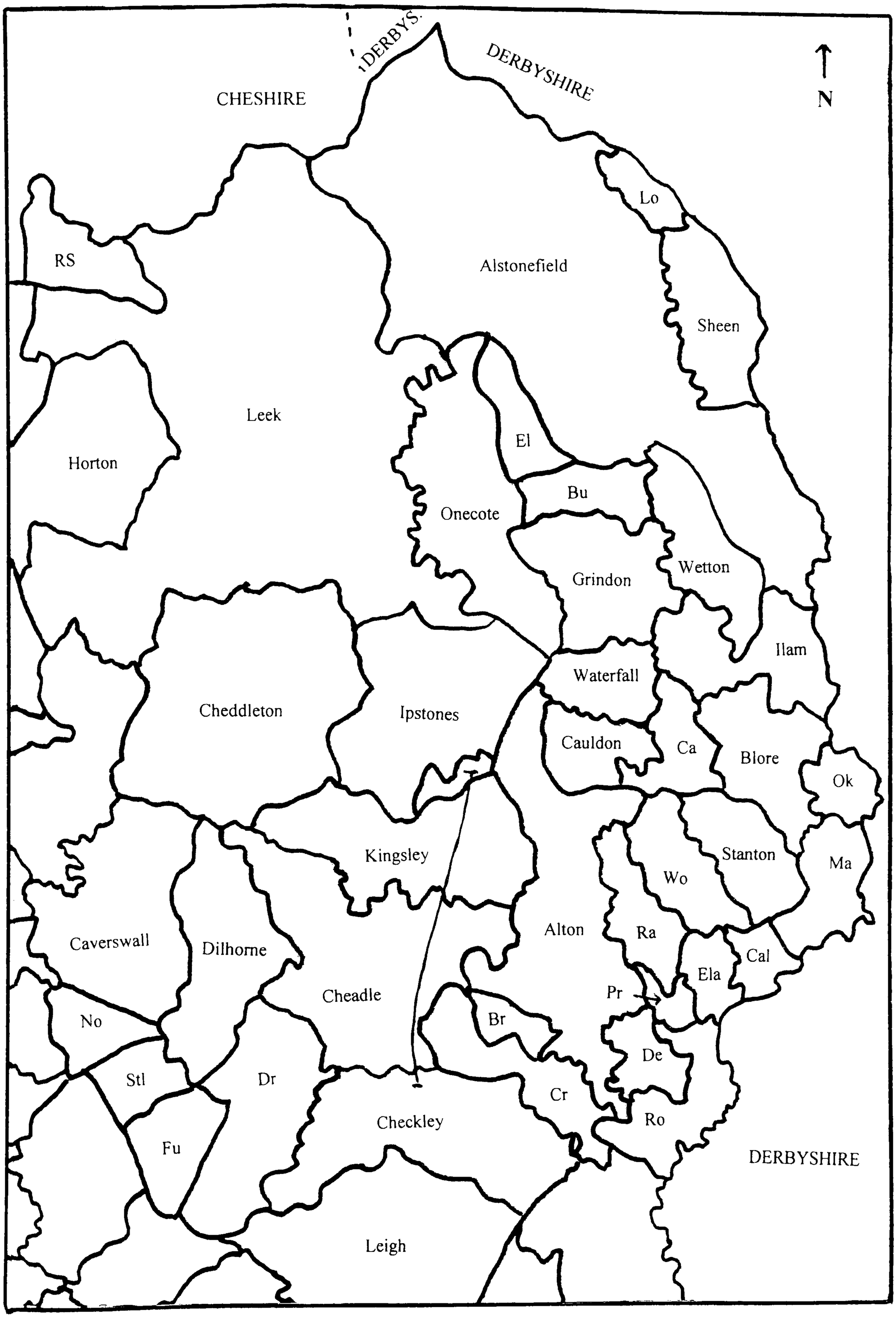
[37] SRO Q/RDc24, Inclosure Map for Alstonefield (1839); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 43/06 (undated, *c.* 1949).



Map 9: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: north-east.
Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

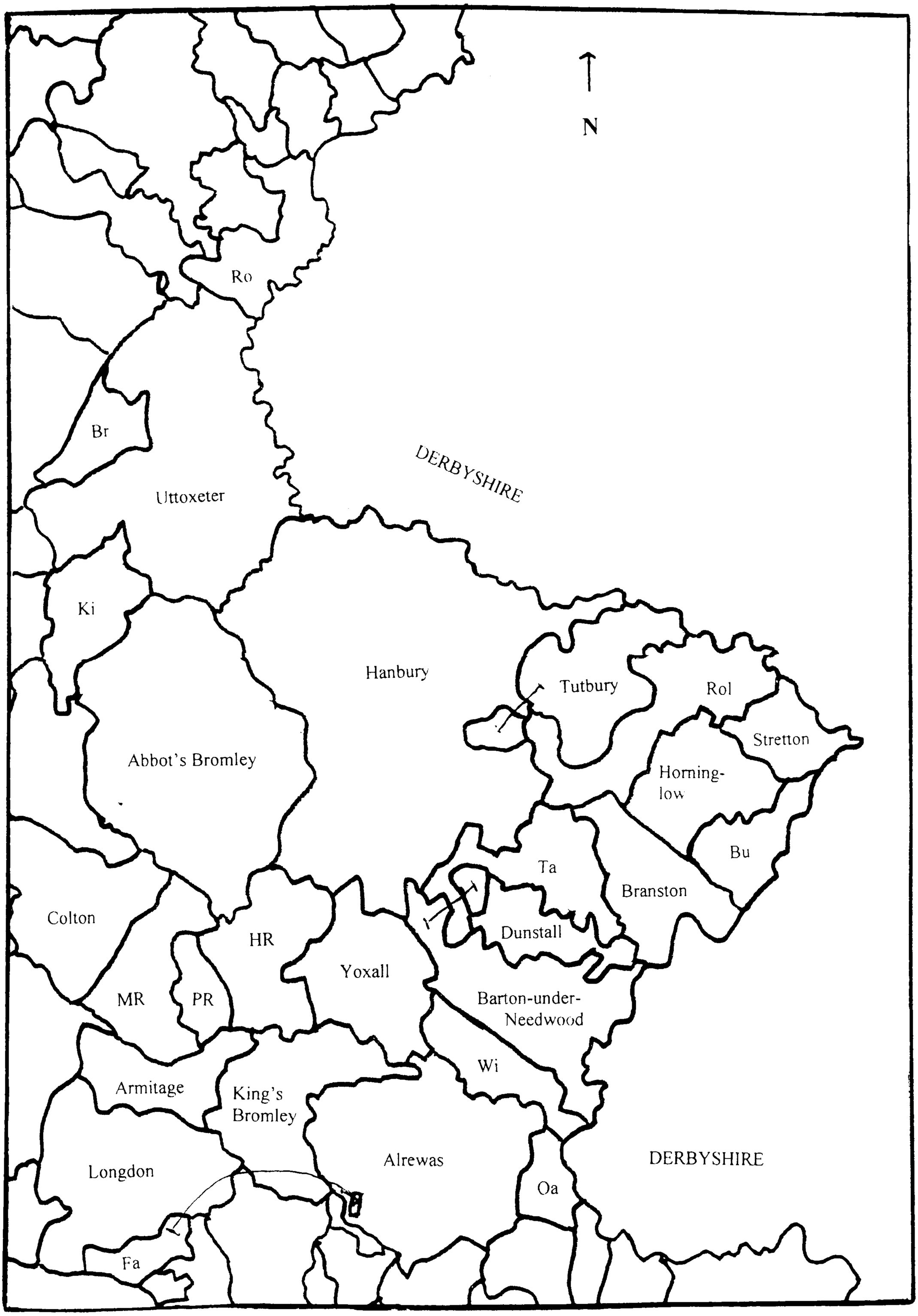
Key to Map 9

Scale 

0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

Br	Bradley-in-the-Moors
Bu	Butterton
Ca	Calton
Cal	Calwick
Cr	Croxden
De	Denstone
Dr	Draycott-in-the-Moors
El	Elkstone
Ela	Ellaston
Fu	Fulford
Lo	Longnor
Ma	Mayfield
Mo	Moddershall
No	Normacot
Ok	Okeover
Pr	Prestwood
Ra	Ramshorn
Ro	Rocester
RS	Rushton Spencer
Stl	Stallington
Wo	Wootton

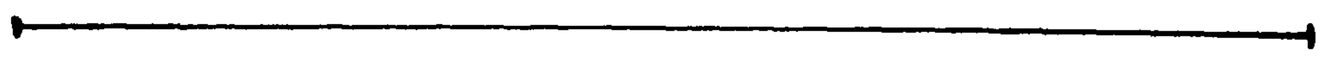


Map 10: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: central-east.
Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

Key to Map 10

Scale



0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

Br	Bramshall
Bu	Burton-upon-Trent and Burton Extra
Fa	Farewell
HR	Hamstall Ridware
Ki	Kingstone
MR	Mavesyn Ridware
Oa	Oakley
PR	Pipe Ridware
Ro	Rocester
Rol	Rolleston
Ta	Tatenhill and Callingwood
Wi	Wichnor

The Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary crossed into the Trent's drainage basin at the point where it traversed Axe Edge [at SK 029685]. Its course soon becomes straightforward to follow, as it mainly coincided with three major rivers: the Dove, the Trent and the Mease. The Dove effectively formed the boundary between the two shires for over 30 miles, from its source at Dove Head [SK 030684] to very near to the point where the river now flows into the Trent [SK 272258] in the eastern corner of Stretton township. In the nineteenth century the county boundary admittedly made a few deviations from the line of the river, and while these may have been present when the boundary was originally laid down, it seems more likely that they either were the result of slight movements in the course of the river over time (perhaps due to culverting, with the nineteenth-century county boundary therefore marking the earlier course of the Dove), or were the consequence of small transfers of land being made between Derbyshire and Staffordshire at various times prior to the nineteenth century.[38] The Dove is a major landscape feature throughout much of its course. Close to its source, in North Staffordshire, it runs for a number of miles through a steep-sided valley and remains a very visible feature in the landscape as its valley becomes progressively more shallow.

By the time Staffordshire's boundary coincides with the course of the Trent, just north of modern Burton-upon-Trent, this river was likewise a prominent landscape feature in a shallow valley.[39] The Trent splits into two for a short distance at Burton-upon-Trent, and the medieval shire boundary presumably followed the

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[38] Examples of such deviations are to be found in the parishes or townships of Blore, Calwick, Marchington, Rolleston, Tutbury, Rolleston and Uttoxeter: LRO B/A/15, Tithe maps for Blore with Swinscoe (1845), Calwick (1844), Rolleston (1838), Tutbury (1841) and Uttoxeter (1843). The Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary also leaves the Dove for a short distance in Rocester parish, being marked by the River Churnet, a tributary of the Dove: LRO B/A/15 Tithe Map for Rocester (1850).

[39] By the twentieth century the situation was different. In 1894 the townships of Stapenhill and Winshall were transferred from Derbyshire to Staffordshire meaning that the county boundary left the Trent at SK 264244 and rejoined it at 246214: N.J. Tringham in N.J. Tringham (ed.) *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume IX: Burton-upon-Trent* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2003) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. IX*], p. 1, n. 1.

main, eastern, channel as it did in *c.* 1760[40] (which is also said to have marked 'Burton's boundary' in 1598[41]). Having left Burton the boundary followed the Trent south for a few miles, breaking off from that river at the confluence of the Rivers Mease and Trent in Oakley township [at SK 195147], and moving east along the Mease (with Staffordshire land therefore to the south of the river and Derbyshire land to the north). The Derbyshire-Staffordshire boundary coincided with the Mease for approximately six miles, until it reached the north-east corner of Clifton Campville parish [SK 273114], where Staffordshire converged with Leicestershire.[42]

4.3.3 Staffordshire and Leicestershire

Staffordshire shared a boundary with Leicestershire for just half a mile. It coincided with field boundaries in the nineteenth century, and did not follow any prominent landscape feature.[43] The course of the Staffordshire-Leicestershire boundary is shown on Map 11.

4.3.4 Staffordshire and Warwickshire

The boundary between Staffordshire and Warwickshire ran from Clifton Campville parish [at SK 278100] to the south-eastern corner of the parish of Harborne [SP 037832]. It made less use of prominent natural topographical features than did the boundary Staffordshire shared with Cheshire or Derbyshire, and its relationship in the nineteenth century with the landscape is, in places, more difficult to discern. It cannot, however, be said to have followed a wholly random course in respect of its

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[40] SRO D(W)1734/2/3/133, A Map of the Borough of Burton-upon-Trent and Some Part of Bond End or Burton Extra (1760); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet SK 22 (1969).
[41] Tringham in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IX*, p. 1.
[42] In the mid nineteenth century the Staffordshire parish of Clifton Campville also took in a small block of land north of the Mease: LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Clifton and Haunton (1839).
[43] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Clifton and Haunton (1839); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 43/21 (1947).

relationship to the area's natural topography. The course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary is shown on Maps 11 and 13.

At first the boundary continued to be marked by field boundaries, moving generally southwards and westwards until it converged with the modern A453 in Statfold parish [at SK 243067]. It ran south-west along this road towards Tamworth, whereupon its precise course in the nineteenth century becomes very difficult to decipher.[44] This situation is probably a relic of the historically complex administrative geography of the Tamworth area: although there is no specific entry for Tamworth in Domesday Book, its burgesses are mentioned in the Staffordshire and Warwickshire folios, implying that Tamworth was divided between those shires in 1086.[45] This was certainly the situation in the mid nineteenth century, when the western half of Tamworth's parish (incorporating part of Tamworth borough and the townships or chapelries of Fazeley, Syerscote and Wigginton) was considered to be part of Staffordshire, and the eastern half (incorporating part of Tamworth Borough and the townships, chapelries or liberties of Castle Liberty, Amington and Stonedelph, Bolehill and Glascote, and Wilnecote) was in Warwickshire.[46] The actual course of the boundary through the borough was highly confused in the mid nineteenth century and is now difficult to distinguish, although it evidently cut through the heart of the borough, running down the town's High Street in the late nineteenth century, as is depicted on Map 12.[47] The reasons for this unusual situation will be discussed more fully at a later stage, although it almost certainly results from the downgrading of

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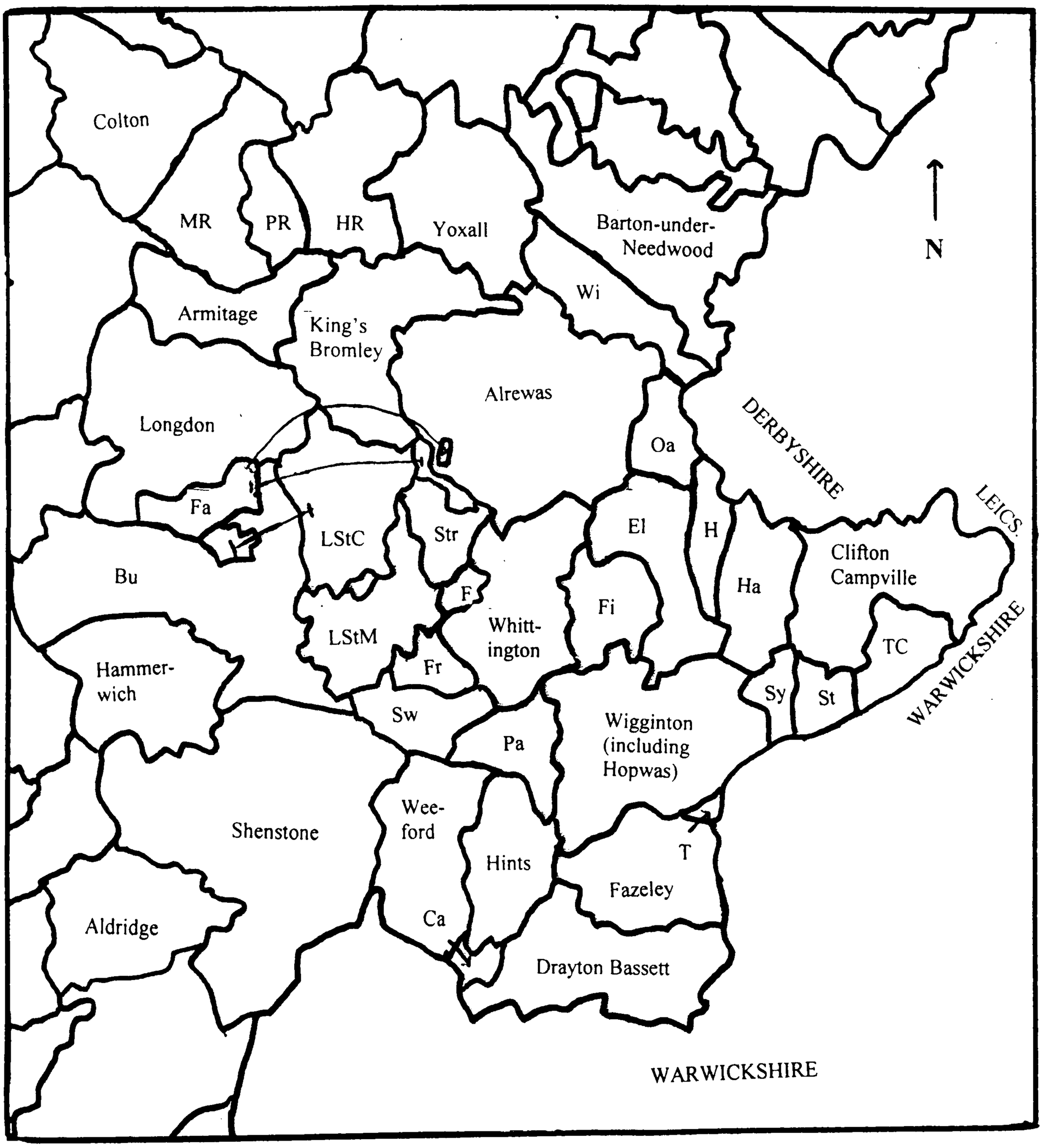
[44] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Clifton and Haunton (1839) & Thorpe Constantine (1839); WSL Fac.150a, Estate Map for Statfold (1733); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 43/20 (undated *c.* 1949).
[45] Staffordshire: DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,9 & 1,30. Warwickshire: DB, f. 238; Plaister (ed.), DB*: Warwicks.*, 1,5.
[46] W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1834), pp. 379-80; Youngs, *Guide*, p. 425.
[47] S.R. Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', in N.P. Brooks & C. Cubitt (eds.), *St. Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), p. 155; M. Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 152.

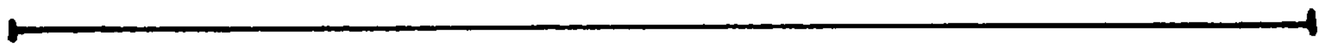


Map 11: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: south-east (1).
Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

Key to Map 11

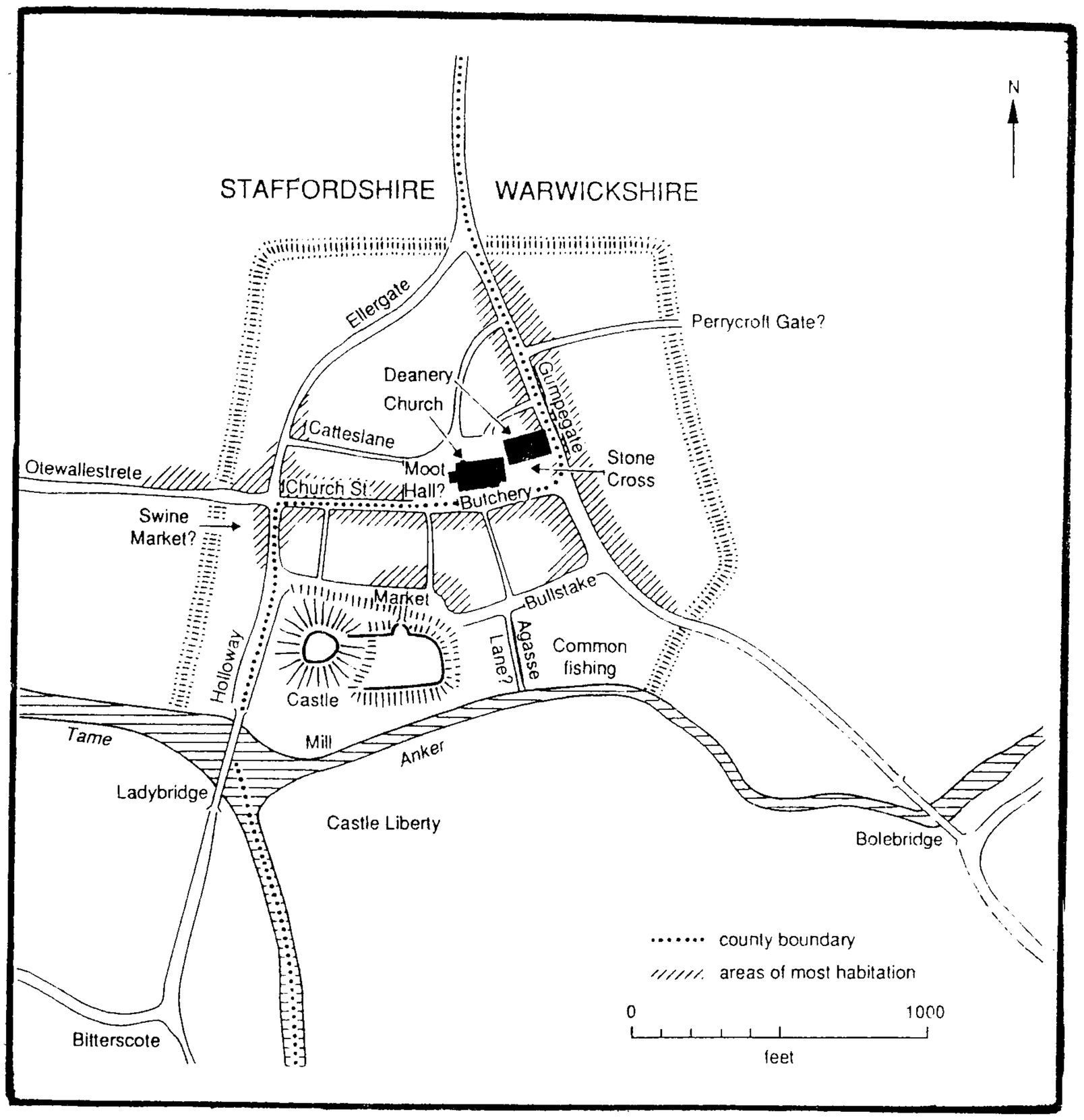
Scale



0 miles 10 miles

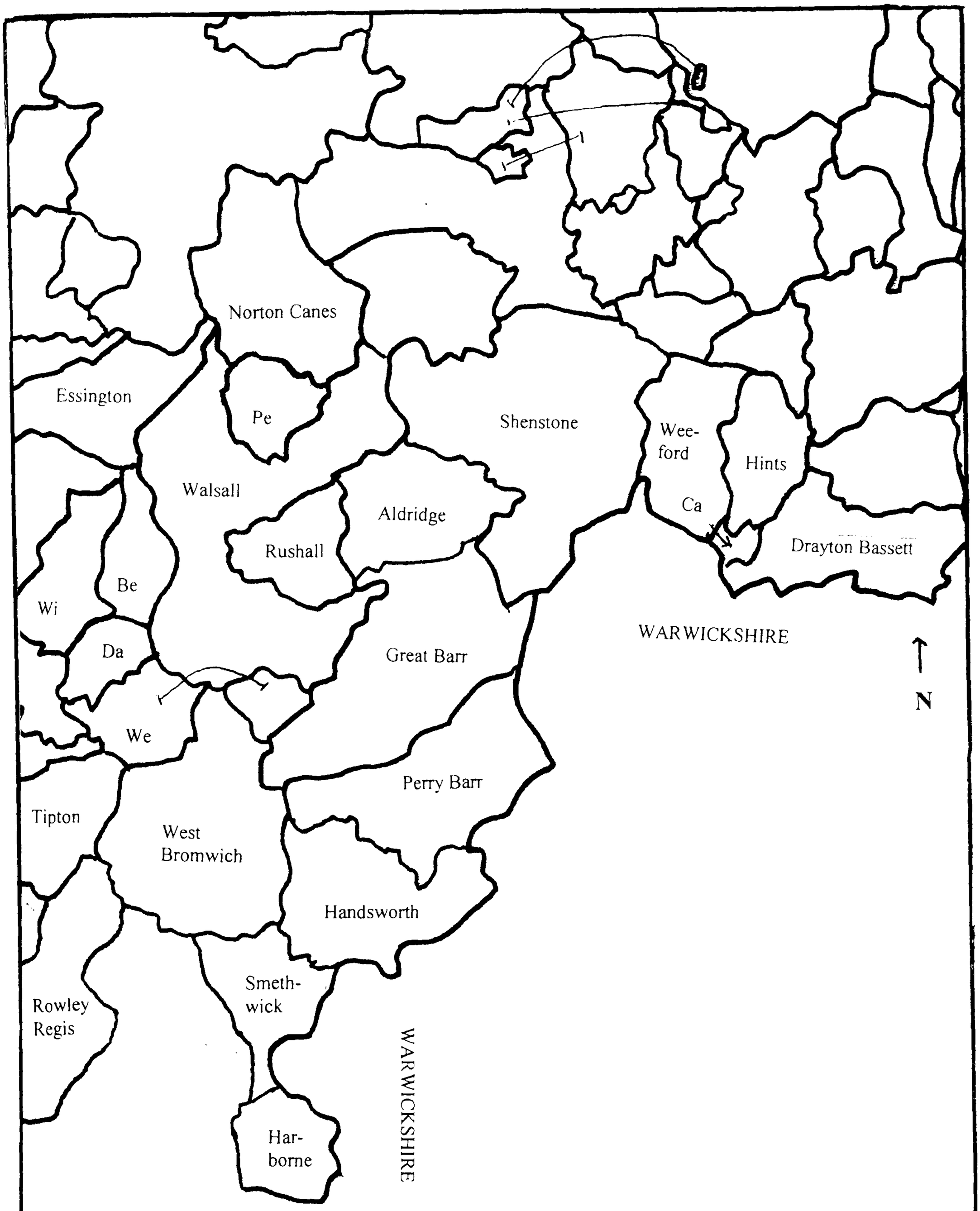
Abbreviations

Bu	Burntwood, Edjal, Woodhouse, Pipe Hill and Wall
Ca	Canwell (extra parochial)
El	Elford
F	Fulfin
Fa	Farewell
Fi	Fisherwick
Fr	Freeford
H	Haslour
Ha	Harlaston
HR	Hamstall Ridware
LStC	Lichfield, St Chad
LStM	Lichfield, St Michael
MR	Mavesyn Ridware
Oa	Oakley
Pa	Packington
PR	Pipe Ridware
St	Statfold
Str	Streethay
Sw	Swinfen
Sy	Syerscote
T	Tamworth borough
TC	Thorpe Constantine
Wi	Wichnor



Map 12: The course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary through Tamworth in the late nineteenth century. The boundary was moved in 1890

Source: M. Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 152



Map 13: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: south-east (2).
Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

Key to Map 13

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

Be	Bentley
Da	Darlaston
Pe	Pelsall
We	Wednesbury
Wi	Willenhall

Tamworth's administrative role and the decision that it would not become a shire town.[48]

Fortunately Staffordshire's nineteenth-century boundary becomes easier to discern south of the borough, picking up the River Tame at the southern limits of Castle Liberty [SK 206032]. It then followed the general line of the river southwards for approximately two miles, sometimes leaving the river but always shadowing its course, before turning sharply westwards at the south-eastern corner of Drayton Bassett parish [SP 200989].[49] From here, the boundary ran in a generally westerly direction for around eight miles, over rising ground, coinciding with the southern boundaries of Drayton Bassett, Weeford and Shenstone parishes, and also that of the extra-parochial area of Canwell, until it picked up the line of the Roman road called Ryknild Street near modern Streetly [at SP 099997].[50] Between the Tame and Ryknild Street the Staffordshire-Warwickshire border coincided with field boundaries and roads in the mid nineteenth century, but from Streetly it followed the line of Ryknild Street south-westwards for around a mile and a half. It departed from Ryknild Street at the northern corner of Perry Barr township [SP 082967], and followed the eastern and south-eastern boundaries of the township for just under four miles, which were marked by roads in the nineteenth century [until SP 074925]. Staffordshire's boundary then took up the same line as the southern boundary of Handsworth parish and the eastern ones of Smethwick township and Harborne parish, until it reached the south-eastern corner of Harborne [SP 037832]. This section was marked mainly by roads and minor watercourses in the mid nineteenth century.[51]

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[48] See the conclusion, pp. 342-44.
[49] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Fazeley (1850) & Drayron Bassett (1838).
[50] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Drayton Bassett (1838), Weeford (1844) & Shenstone (1838); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheets 43/20 (undated *c.* 1949); SP09 (1956), 42/29 (1951) & 43/10 (1947).
[51] BCL [no reference number], Tithe Maps for Handsworth (1840) and Harborne (1842); OS Index to the Tithe Survey Series, Sheet 62 S.W. (undated); *The Old Series*, p. 98.

4.3.5 Staffordshire and Worcestershire

Still moving clockwise, the boundary between Staffordshire and Worcestershire started at the south-eastern corner of Harborne parish and ended in that of Upper Arley. Like the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary, the one Staffordshire shared with Worcestershire rarely coincided with major natural landscape features. Its late eleventh-century course is also once again difficult to determine in places. The course of the Staffordshire-Worcestershire boundary is shown on Maps 13 and 14.

At first the boundary ran due west, coinciding with the course of the Bourn Brook in the nineteenth century for approximately a mile and a half, whereupon it turned sharply north [at SP 016833]. From here the Staffordshire-Worcestershire boundary coincided with the western boundaries of Harborne and Smethwick for approximately four miles, mainly making use of roads, field boundaries and minor watercourses.[52] But from the point where Staffordshire's boundary converged with Rowley Regis township [SP 002898] the area's Domesday shire geography becomes more difficult to determine, because we do not know to which shire Rowley belonged in 1086.[53] We can, however, be more confident about the likely course of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary from the place where the northern boundary of Dudley (Worcestershire), the southern one of Tipton (Staffordshire) and the northern one of Rowley Regis (shire affiliation uncertain) converged [SO 961917]. In the nineteenth century much of Dudley's northern boundary followed no prominent natural landscape features; nor did its eastern one in those sections not

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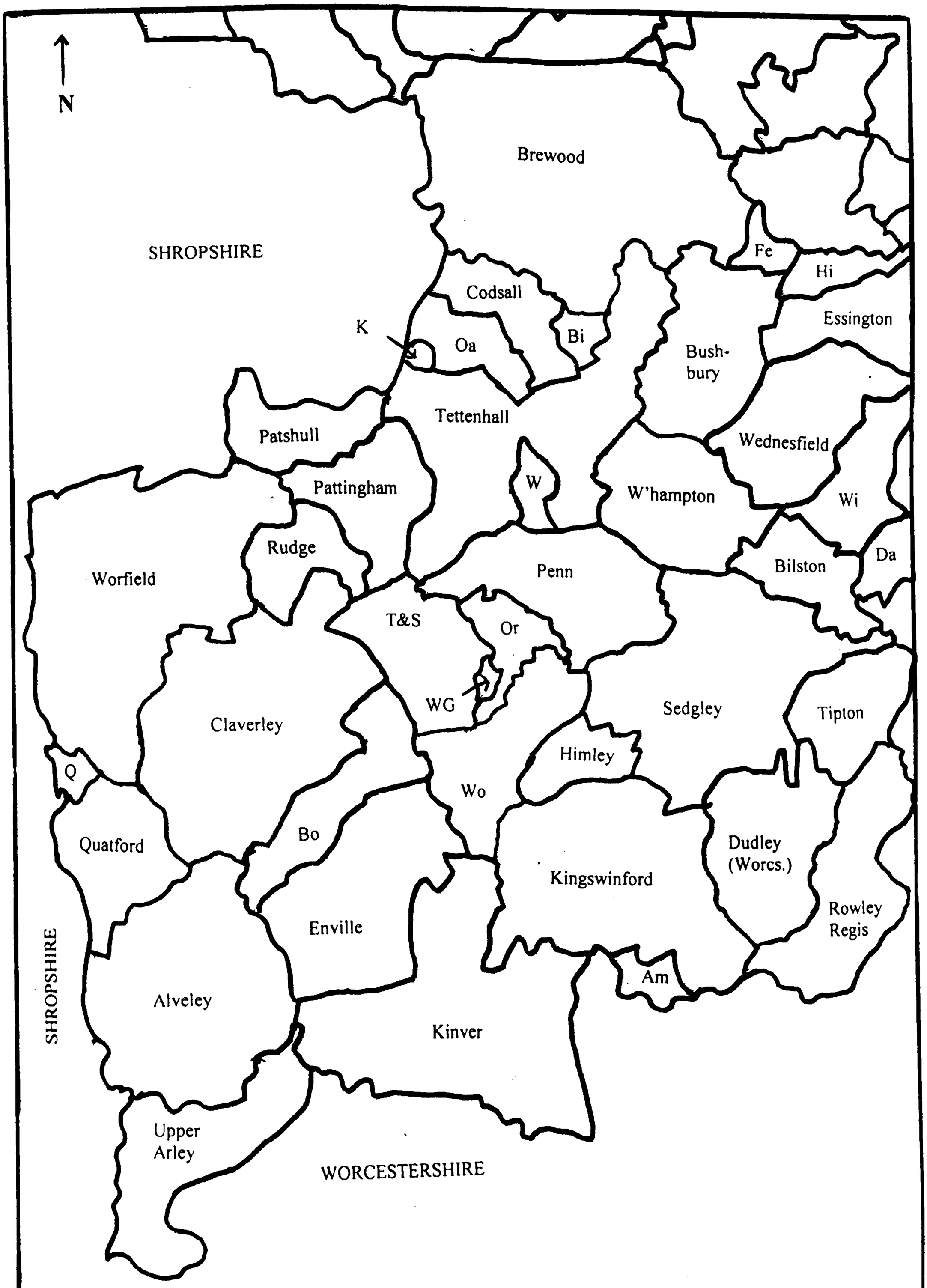
[52] BCL [no reference number], Tithe Map for Harborne (1842); OS Index to the Tithe Survey Series, Sheet 62 S.W (undated); *The Old Series*, p. 97.

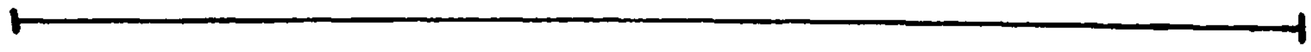
[53] Above, pp. 103-04. The course of the shire boundary depicted on Maps 13 and 14 is not intended to obscure these difficulties; it is merely intended to present the course of the Staffordshire's boundary in a visually coherent and manageable form.



Map 14: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: south-west. Key on next page. The map includes land that was either wholly in Staffordshire in 1086 or divided between that shire and Warwickshire, but which was later transferred to Shropshire (comprising the parishes or townships of Alveley, Claverley, Quatford, Quatt, Rudge and Worfield). Map adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A CartographicAnalysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

Key to Map 14

Scale



0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

Am	Amblecoat
Bi	Bilbrooke
Bo	Bobbington
Da	Darlaston
Fe	Featherstone
K	Kingswood
Hi	Hilton
Oa	Oaken
Or	Orton
Q	Quatt
T&S	Trysull and Seisdon
W	Wightwick
W'hampton	Wolverhampton
WG	Woodford Grange (extra-parochial)
Wi	Willenhall
Wo	Wombourne

marked by tributaries of the River Stour.[54] It was in Dudley parish that Staffordshire's boundary traversed the watershed between the Trent and Severn drainage basins.

Staffordshire's boundary turned sharply west at the south-eastern corner of Kingswinford parish, whereupon it picked up the course of the River Stour [at SO930852]. It followed the Stour westwards for around two and a half miles [until SO 888860]. Now coinciding with the eastern and southern limits of Kinver parish, it moved south for approximately two miles along a line of relatively high ground, and then ran west, traversing Kinver Edge, until it reached the eastern boundary of Romsley parish [SO 805841].[55] Once again the course of the late eleventh-century boundary becomes more difficult to determine at this point, because Romsley was part of the aforementioned block of land which was transferred to Shropshire, probably at the behest of the Montgomery family, and where, it has been seen, the precise shire geography of 1086 cannot at present be deciphered.[56] Upper Arley may, therefore, have been almost a detached 'island' of Staffordshire at that time, surrounded by Warwickshire and Worcestershire (as opposed to being a long 'finger' of Staffordshire extending into Worcestershire, as it was in the nineteenth century).

4.3.6 Staffordshire and Shropshire

The boundary between Staffordshire and Shropshire does not follow any single natural topographical feature, and once again its course fails to suggest that

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[54] The OS Old Series one-inch maps and the Index to the Tithe Survey edition of that series are not sufficiently detail for firm conclusions to be drawn about with what on the ground Staffordshire's boundary coincided in the sections which did not follow minor watercourses: OS Index to the Tithe Survey Series, Sheet 62 S.W (undated); *The Old Series*, pp. 96-97.

[55] SRO D891/3, William Bright's Map of Kinver Parish (*c.* 1829-30); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 32/88 (undated *c.* 1949).

[56] Above, pp. 99-102. The situation depicted on Map 14 is not meant to indicate that the block of eight manors that appear within the Staffordshire and Warwickshire Domesday folios but which were later transferred to Shropshire, probably by 1102, were necessarily considered to be part of Staffordshire in 1086. Rather, the ecclesiastical parishes that comprised the eight manors in question have been included on Map 14 because doing so makes it easier to visualise this area.

Staffordshire represented an easily identifiable single natural region. It did make use of major landscape features, albeit for shorter distances than was the case with the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary. The course of the Staffordshire-Shropshire boundary is shown on Maps 14 and 15.

The next point at which we can be confident about the likely course of Staffordshire's Domesday boundary is at the northern boundary of Worfield parish. Worfield marked the northern limits of the aforementioned block of land that was transferred to Shropshire after 1086, and, unlike Quatt, Romsley, Rudge and Shipley was certainly part of Staffordshire since it appears in that shire's Domesday folios.[57] Worfield's northern boundary cut across the Severn valley's floor making use mainly of field boundaries and tributaries of the Severn in the nineteenth century until it reached the north-eastern corner of Patshull parish [SJ 827013].[58] The boundary then coincided with a major natural topographical feature for approximately six miles, heading north along the watershed between the Rivers Trent and Severn.[59] But near where it converged with Weston-under-Lizard parish, it dropped back into the Severn's drainage basin, whereupon it soon took up the course of the Roman road called Watling Street. It followed the Roman road westwards for around four miles, leaving it at the south-western corner of the parish of Sheriff Hales [SJ 729108].[60]

From here the boundary between Staffordshire and Shropshire ran in a generally northerly direction for around 20 miles. This long section of the boundary

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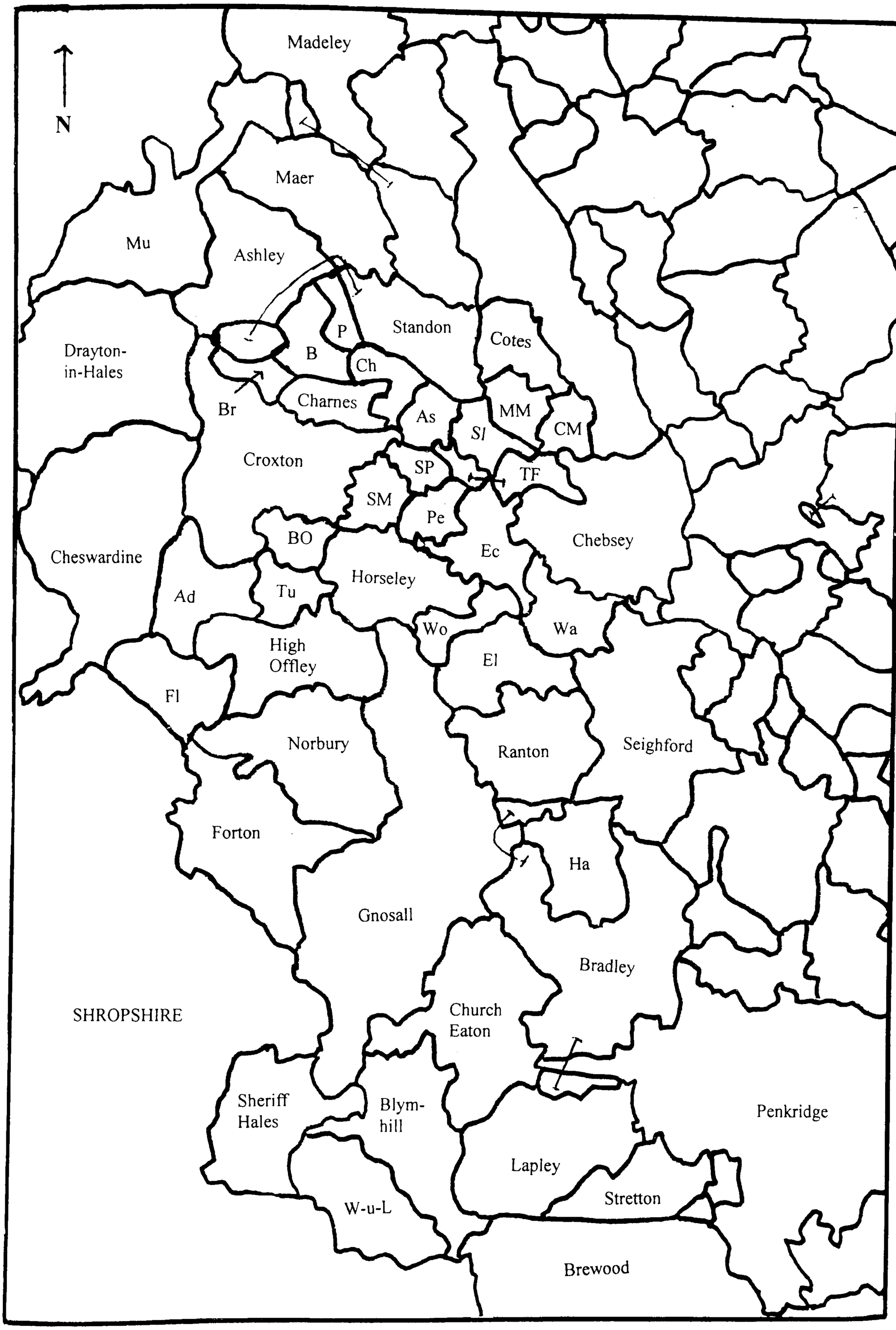
[57] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 9,1.
[58] SA PF314/1-6, Tithe Map for Worfield (1839); SRO Q/RDc14, Inclosure Map for Patshull (1811).
[59] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Tettenhall (1851), Kingswood (1841), Oaken (1841), Codsall (1850) and Brewood (1838); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet SJ 80 (1959).
[60] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Weston-under-Lizard (1840) and Sheriff Hales (undated); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet SJ 71 (1951). In 1086 Sheriff Hales was in Staffordshire but part of the manor was transferred to Shropshire, perhaps once again at the behest of the Montgomery family by 1102: F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Shropshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986) [hereafter *DB: Shrops.*], Note ES1,6. The partial transfer of lands belonging to Sheriff Hales was reflected in the nineteenth-century parochial geography of the area, when the ecclesiastical parish of Sheriff Hales was divided between Staffordshire and Shropshire: White, *History*, p. 516; Youngs, *Guide*, p. 422. The remainder of Sheriff Hales was transferred to Shropshire in 1895.



Map 15: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: central-west.
Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

Key to Map 15

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

Ad	Adbaston
As	Aspley
B	Bromley
BO	Bishop's Offley
Br	Broughton
Ch	Chatcull
CC&HC	Chapel Chorlton and Hill Chorlton
CM	Cold Meece
Ec	Eccleshall
El	Ellenhall
Fl	Flashbrook
Ha	Haughton
MM	Mill Meece
Mu	Mucklestone
P	Podmore
Pe	Pershall
Sl	Slindon
SM	Sugnall Magna
SP	Sugnall Parva
TF	Three Farms
Tu	Tunstall
Wa	Walton
Wo	Wootton
W-u-L	Weston-under-Lizard

was not marked by any single major landscape feature, either natural or man-made, mainly coinciding with minor watercourses (tributaries of the River Tern) in the nineteenth century, but sometimes also with roads and field boundaries. The boundary also picked up the course of a Roman road for approximately two miles in Flashbrook, a township within the parish of Adbaston [at SJ 745238].[61] The likely course of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary becomes more difficult to discern once it reaches the large parish of Drayton-in-Hales, which was divided between that shire and Shropshire in the nineteenth century. The shire boundary was evidently more fluid here, since the Domesday manor of Tyrley, within Drayton-in-Hales parish, and part of Shropshire in 1086, was subsequently transferred to Staffordshire.[62] But where the boundary between it and the neighbouring manor of Almington, which was in Staffordshire in the late eleventh century, is likely to have lain cannot, however, be discovered reliably from Drayton's tithe map, since the layout of its townships was highly confused in the nineteenth century.[63]

Mucklestone, immediately north-east of Drayton, was likewise divided between Shropshire and Staffordshire in the mid nineteenth century. Mucklestone comprised nine townships, four of which were part of Shropshire (Bearstone, Dorrington, Gravenhunger and Woore) with the remaining five in Staffordshire (Aston, Knighton, Mucklestone, Oakley and Winnington).[64] This area was similarly

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[61] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Maps for Forton (1838), Flashbrook (1842) and Adbaston (1840); SRO D593/H3/401b, Tithe Map for Croxton (1839); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 33/72 (undated, *c.* 1949). For the course of the Roman road, which departed from Watling Street near Stretton (Staffordshire) and ran to Whitchurch (Shropshire): I.D. Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain* (London: John Baker, 1967), pp. 278 & 293-94.

[62] DB, f. 257; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, 4,14,5; Youngs, *Guide*, p. 427.

[63] LRO B/A/15 Tithe Map for Drayton-in-Hales (*c.* 1842). For a published version of the tithe map: T. Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries of Staffordshire Volume I: Pirehill* (Barlaston: Malthouse Press, 2005), pp. 64-65. For Almington: DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 8,22. The straightforward course of the shire boundary depicted on Map 15 is not intended to obscure these difficulties; rather, it is intended to present the course of the Staffordshire's boundary in a visually coherent and manageable form.

[64] White, *History*, p. 649.

divided between the two shires since eight of the nine townships are named in Domesday Book and none are associated with a different shire at that time: Oakley, Knighton, Mucklestone and Winnington appear within the Staffordshire Domesday folios, while Gravenhunger, Woore, Dorrington, and Bearstone appear in Shropshire's.[65] For most of its course through Mucklestone parish the Shropshire-Staffordshire boundary coincided with the River Tern, here within a few miles of its source, with Staffordshire land generally to the south of the Tern and Shropshire land to the north. This raises the possibility that Knighton, on the north side of the Tern and surrounded on three sides by Shropshire townships, was not originally part of Staffordshire, but had been transferred to that shire by 1086.[66] From the place where the Staffordshire-Shropshire boundary finally left the Tern [SJ 741395] it ran over rising ground, crossing the watershed between the Severn and Mersey drainage basins, until it converged with the parish of Madeley. It was at the north-eastern corner of Mucklestone parish that the boundary between Staffordshire and Shropshire ended and the one between Staffordshire and Cheshire began [at SJ 745446].

4.4 The relationship between Staffordshire's boundary and the natural landscape

Returning to the basic hypotheses for Staffordshire's origins set out above,[67] it can be seen that Staffordshire was not a wholly coherent territory in respect of its earliest discoverable boundary's relationship with the natural landscape. It did not represent an easily identifiable single natural region which suggests that a close correspondence

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[65] For the Staffordshire manors: *DB*, ff. 246 & 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,35 & 17,7-17,9. For the Shropshire manors: *DB*, ff. 257 & 258; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, 4,15,1-4,15,3 & 4,19,7.

[66] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Mucklestone (1838); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheets 33/63 (undated, *c.* 1949), SJ 73 (1960) & 33/74 (1948); OS 1:25000 Series, Sheet 33/63 (undated, *c.* 1949). For Knighton: DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 17,7.

[67] See p. 94.

with the natural landscape was not the most important criterion in determining Staffordshire's geographical extent. Nor did the boundary follow a wholly random course in respect of its relationship with the natural topography: large sections of it coincided with major rivers in the nineteenth century, notably in the case of the boundary shared between Staffordshire and Derbyshire. Indeed, there is, arguably, a certain topographical 'logic' to its geography, since the shire is limited in the north and south by agriculturally marginal upland areas in which several shires converge (Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire in the north; and Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the south, on the Birmingham plateau).

This leaves open the possibility that major landscape features were used to mark Staffordshire's boundary whenever it was possible to do so, while the rest of the boundary joined up these lengths by the shortest or most straightforward routes (and therefore that although using major landscape features for Staffordshire's boundary may have been desirable where possible, it was not the major factor that determined the shire's extent). It also suggests that any relationship between the hidage assessment attached to Staffordshire and the shire's origins may have been more complicated than the traditional model for shire origins in the West Midlands implies.[68] That is to say, even if Staffordshire's extent was primarily determined by its hidage assessment, major landscape features were also used when it was convenient to do so. Indeed, the fact that Staffordshire was not a wholly coherent territory in respect of its boundary's relationship with the natural landscape also leaves open the possibility that the shire reflected pre-existing land-units, or represented the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units. It is therefore important to assess what

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[68] See Chapter 1.3.1 & 1.3.3.

conclusions can be drawn about the spatial relationship between the extent of those territories and that of the shire.

4.5 Middle Anglo-Saxon territories in the Staffordshire area

Any attempt to reconstruct the middle Anglo-Saxon territorial layout of the Midlands faces acute problems. While the Tribal Hidage and Bede's Ecclesiastical History record the names of several kingdoms and lesser polities which may have impinged on the Staffordshire area, it is rarely possible to draw reliable conclusions about the extents of their territories. Furthermore, although we have more precise information about the possible layout of the eighth- and ninth-century provinces of the Mercian kingdom, it will be seen that reconstructing the provincial geography of the Staffordshire area may be more difficult than in other parts of the West Midlands.[69] The remainder of this chapter will therefore, firstly, consider what can be said about the layout of kingdoms and lesser polities recorded in the Tribal Hidage and by Bede, and, secondly, assess how the course of Staffordshire's Domesday boundary related to the provincial geography of the Staffordshire area, so far as this can be established. We have also seen that Steven Bassett has argued that the West Midland shires may reflect the putative territories attached to a network of fortified places spread throughout the region by the eighth or early ninth century.[70] This model, however, will be addressed in the next chapter, which assesses how far the roles and functions that Staffordshire served may have influenced its original geographical extent.

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[69] It is often argued that the thirteenth-century diocesan geography of the Midlands provides a guide to the layout of the region's provinces in the eighth or ninth century: below, pp. 124-27.

[70] Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', pp. 147-73; *idem*, 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), pp. 53-85. See Chapter 1.3.1, p. 19-20.

4.5.1 The Tribal Hidage

Most reconstructions of the middle Anglo-Saxon territorial layout of the Midlands have taken the document commonly known as the Tribal Hidage as their starting point. The Tribal Hidage comprises a list of 34 kingdoms and lesser polities, each of which is given a hidage assessment. Many of the polities that appear in the Tribal Hidage are otherwise unknown to us, although some of them, such as the Mercians who are assessed at 30,000 hides, remained an important part of England's political landscape until the later Anglo-Saxon period. The date of the original document is not known, but it survives in three different forms, only one of which, sometimes called Recension A, dates from the Anglo-Saxon period, being copied out in a hand of the first half of the eleventh century.[71] Although the provenance of the Tribal Hidage is also unknown, the document is usually thought to be a list of tribute assessments produced at the behest of one of the major Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, probably Mercia. This is because, firstly, its opening statement refers to the Mercians, and, secondly, in the words of Wendy Davies, 'the distribution of identifiable peoples is such as to indicate a predominant Mercian interest: apart from the *Elmedsætna* no people from north of the Humber are included'.[72] Its composition is usually attributed to the seventh or eighth century, probably because many of the kingdoms and lesser polities

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[71] D.N. Dumville, 'The Tribal Hidage: An Introduction to its Texts and their History', in S.R. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), p. 225. Wendy Davies and Hayo Vierck suggest that the hand belongs to the early eleventh century: W. Davies & H. Vierck, 'The Contexts of Tribal Hidage: Social Aggregates and Settlement Patterns', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 8 (1974), pp. 224-25. For further discussion of the three recensions and their relative usefulness: *ibid.*, pp. 288-92.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 225. Also: S.R. Bassett, 'In Search of the Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms', in *idem* (ed.), *The Origins*, p. 17; C.R. Hart, 'The Tribal Hidage', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th Series, 21 (1971), p. 133; *idem*, 'The Kingdom of Mercia', in A. Dornier (ed.), *Mercian Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 44; F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1971), p. 296. Nicholas Brooks, however, argues that if the Tribal Hidage 'is indeed a tribute list rather than a general register of hidage assessments capable of serving a variety of purposes, then it seems unlikely to have been Mercian; for the first people whose hidage assessment is listed are the Mercians themselves – "30,000 hides". An early medieval king did not impose tribute on his own kingdom': N.P. Brooks, 'The Formation of the Mercian Kingdom', in Bassett (ed.), *The Origins*, pp. 159, 167-68.

listed within the Tribal Hidage are not recorded in sources relating to the later Anglo-Saxon period, and so appear to have been subsumed within their larger and more powerful neighbours by that time.

A number of attempts have been made to reconstruct the precise boundaries of the kingdoms and lesser polities recorded in the Tribal Hidage.[73] But given the paucity of our information regarding many of the peoples listed within the document – some of whom, as we have seen, are not heard of again – the results of such reconstructions are often predominantly speculative. They tend to be based on a number of premises, some more reasonable than others. These are: firstly, that even some of the lesser-known polities left recognisable traces of their names in place-names, and so their location, in general terms, can be ascertained; secondly, that the polities represent discrete and contiguous land-units, and hence utilised prominent landscape features for their boundaries; and, thirdly, that the hidage figures recorded for each polity operated within a uniform system, and so each figure can be used to calculate the approximate size of the land-unit in question.[74] Thus, in the words of Wendy Davies, 'assuming further that the whole of southern England must be intended, the problem [of reconstructing the territories of the Tribal Hidage] becomes akin to that of a jigsaw puzzle'. But there are, she notes, 'clearly dangers in attempting to combine three quite separate methodological concepts, each of which depends upon a separate range of assumptions, in circumstances in which it is difficult to determine the nature of the original text'. Nor, she argues, can we assume that the peoples in question inhabited contiguous territories which easily be translated into recognisable land-units.[75] Consequently, even though there are grounds for thinking

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[73] For example, the speculative maps produced by Cyril Hart: Hart, 'The Tribal Hidage', p. 137; *idem*, 'The Kingdom', pp. 50-51.
[74] Davies & Vierck, 'The Context', p. 228.
[75] *Ibid.*

that some of the polities listed by the Tribal Hidage may have been located in or around the Staffordshire area, their layout cannot be mapped with sufficient precision for reliable conclusions to be drawn about the spatial relationship between them and that of the shire.

We can, however, speculate more productively about where the core or heartland of some of these kingdoms or lesser polities was located. It has already been seen that there are good grounds for thinking that the original heartland of the Mercian kingdom was focused on the upper Trent drainage basin, in which case it would have included much of the area that came to be known as Staffordshire.[76] Similarly, there is a significant concentration of Anglo-Saxon barrow burials spread across North-West Derbyshire and North-East Staffordshire which may, Audrey Ozanne has noted, 'be ascribed to the ancestors of the *Pecsætan* of the Tribal Hidage'.[77] Furthermore, a stray reference in a tenth-century charter also claims that Ballidon (in Derbyshire, located approximately nine miles south of modern Bakewell) was '*in pago pecset*' ('in the district of the *Pecsætan*').[78] But even if this shows that Ballidon was once associated with territory of the *Pecsætan*, it should not be taken to mean that such a territory still existed as a distinct independent polity in the tenth century.

Phil Sidebottom has also identified a 'school' (or 'group') of stone monuments in the area usually associated with the *Pecsætan.* Most of the stone sculpture

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[76] See Chapter 1.2, pp. 2-3.

[77] A. Ozanne, 'The Peak Dwellers', *Medieval Archaeology*, 6-7 (1962-63), p. 47. Also: C. Loveluck, 'Acculturation, Migration and Exchange: the Formation of an Anglo-Saxon Society in the English Peak District, 400 – 700 A.D.' in J. Bintliff & H. Hamerow (eds), *Europe Between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Recent Archaeological and Historical Research in Western and Southern Europe* (British Archaeological Reports: International Series, 617, 1995), pp. 84-98.

[78] S 712a. See: N.P. Brooks, M. Gelling & D. Johnson, 'A New Charter of King Edgar', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 13 (1984), p. 145. Nick Higham has proposed that the territory of the *Pecsætan* may have been comprised of *Hamestan* hundred in Cheshire, the late medieval Derbyshire hundreds of Wirksworth and High Peak, and the late medieval Staffordshire hundred of Totmonslow: N.J. Higham, *The Origins of Cheshire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 171-77.

identified as belonging to this school is to be found in North Derbyshire or Yorkshire, at Bakewell, Bradbourne, Eyam, Sheffield and Wirksworth.[79] Frank Stenton, on the other hand, suggested that the *Westerne*, another polity listed within the Tribal Hidage', 'should perhaps be sought in Cheshire and North Staffordshire', although he did not make the evidential basis of his view clear.[80]

It is similarly difficult to locate with certainty a seventh-century division between the so-called North and South Mercians, which Bede mentions in his Ecclesiastical History. Bede records that following victory over the Mercians in 655, the Northumbrian king Oswiu gave Peada, son of the defeated Mercian king Penda, '*regnum Australium Merciorum, qui sunt, ut dicunt, familiarum quinque milium, discreti fluuio Treanta ab Aquuilonaribus Mercis, quorum terra est familiarum VII milium*'[81] ('the kingdom of the Southern Mercians, which, it is said, consists of 5,000 hides, being divided by the River Trent from the Northern Mercians, whose land is of 7,000 hides'). This boundary may therefore have impinged on the area that came to be known as Staffordshire, since the Trent rises in the north-west of the shire, a couple of miles south of the modern Biddulph [at SJ 8953], and leaves Staffordshire near modern Burton-upon-Trent [SK 280260]. But who, precisely, the North and South Mercians were, and whether they together occupied a smaller territory than the Mercians of the Tribal Hidage, or were merely less heavily assessed, is unknown.

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[79] P.C. Sidebottom, 'Viking Age Stone Monuments and Social Identity in Derbyshire', in D.M. Hadley & J.D. Richards (eds), *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), p. 226. For the problems in identifying and dating such schools: *ibid.*, pp. 213-17.

[80] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 296. For further discussion of the location of the *Westerne*: Davies & Vierck, 'The Contexts', p. 231; Gelling, *The West Midlands*, pp. 83-85; Hart, 'The Tribal Hidage', pp. 139-41; K. Pretty, 'Defining the Magonsæte', in Bassett (ed.), *The Origins*, p. 181.

[81] B. Colgrave & R.A.B. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 294 [Book iii, Ch. 24].

Indeed, nor is it known whether this boundary was a long-lasting one, or, for example, a temporary arrangement imposed by Oswiu.[82]

It can therefore be seen that our knowledge of the layout and nature of the middle Anglo-Saxon territories recorded in the Tribal Hidage and Bede's Ecclesiastical History is, at present, too imprecise for a meaningful comparison to be made between the geographical extent of those territories and that of the West Midland shires. Fortunately, we have more precise, and arguably more accurate, information about the possible layout of the Mercian provinces.

4.5.2 The Mercian provincial geography

It is generally agreed that until the Mercian kingdom was divided between English and Scandinavian rule in 877, it was divided into five provinces, each of which was effectively coterminous with a diocese.[83] This is because by the late seventh century, each of the provinces (or, more properly, each of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and lesser polities out of which the provinces evolved) had been provided with a bishop. Thus, it is often argued that in the West Midlands the province of the Magonsæte was eventually reflected in the diocese of Hereford, the province of the Hwicce was mirrored in the diocese of Worcester, and the core of the Mercian kingdom along with some of its earliest accretions were served by the see of Lichfield.[84] The layout of the region's dioceses can first be mapped using the evidence of the Taxatio Ecclesiastica, a survey compiled on the orders of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291 which assessed the spiritual and temporal incomes of the church in England and Wales, of which Edward

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[82] Brooks, 'The Formation', pp. 161-62.
[83] The division of the Mercian kingdom is discussed in Chapter 6.
[84] Bassett, 'In Search', p. 6; *idem*, 'Medieval Ecclesiastical Organisation in the Vicinity of Wroxeter and its British Antecedents', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 145 (1992), p. 14; *idem*, 'The Administrative Landscape', p. 151; *idem*, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', pp. 9-10; J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer & F.M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Warwickshire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), pp. xvi-xvii; Hart, 'The Kingdom', p. 47.

I was to receive a tenth for several years in respect of an intended crusade.[85] Having taken into account earlier discoverable changes to their boundaries, it is often thought that the layout of the West Midland dioceses at the end of the thirteenth century can then be used as a guide to the geography of the corresponding Mercian provinces.[86]

Staffordshire was much smaller than the thirteenth-century diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, and so there will clearly not be a one-to-one 'fit' between the layouts of the two land-units.[87] But assessing the possible relationship between Staffordshire's boundary and the area's provincial geography may throw light on the shire boundary in two ways. If, for instance, the shire boundary followed a wholly random course in respect of the diocesan one, we may have further grounds for thinking that Staffordshire was effectively created on a 'blank slate' in which pre-existing territories were ignored. Alternatively, if sections of the shire's boundary coincided with that belonging to the diocese, this may provide support for the view that Staffordshire either reflected pre-existing land-units, or represented the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units.

It is important to remember that changes would undoubtedly have been made to the borders of Coventry and Lichfield diocese by the late thirteenth century, and so the diocese will not at that time have been of precisely the same extent as that of the earlier Mercian province.[88] Indeed, although the view that the later medieval dioceses of the West Midlands reflected the layout of the region's earlier provinces is widely accepted, insufficient evidence survives to prove it. Much of the detailed work upon

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[85] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P Nicholai IV circa AD 1291* (London: The Record Commission, 1802) [hereafter *Taxatio*]. For a very useful discussion of the Taxatio: D.W. Probert, 'Church and Landscape: A Study in Social Transition in South Western Britain' (unpublished University of Birmingham PhD Thesis, 2002), pp. 28-41.

[86] Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', p. 151.

[87] For further discussion of the status of this diocese in the late Middle Ages: Chapter 7.2, pp. 243-44.

[88] Bassett, 'Medieval Ecclesiastical Organisation', p. 14. It is almost certain that Yardley, part of the diocese of Worcester at the end of the thirteenth century, had once been part of the diocese of Lichfield: *idem*, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', pp. 9-10.

which this view is based has been conducted in the diocese of Worcester, which has a far better survival of appropriate evidence than has Coventry and Lichfield. This means that changes to the diocese's extent between the eighth and ninth century and the late thirteenth can be detected more easily than in Worcester than in Coventry and Lichfield, where very little pre-tenth-century written evidence survives.[89] On the other hand, considering that each of the kingdoms or lesser polities that preceded the provinces appears to have been provided with a single bishop, the view that the boundaries of the region's dioceses at their earliest discoverable extent reflect the general outline of its provinces is not an unreasonable hypothesis. It must, however, also be remembered that the later ninth- and early tenth-century Scandinavian raids are often thought to have disrupted the layout of dioceses in eastern England. Although there are no recorded instances of Scandinavian activity at Lichfield, given that it is situated within twenty miles of Derby and Leicester – which were both under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the tenth century – we must also keep in mind the possibility that Lichfield suffered greater disruption during the ninth-century Scandinavian raiding, or division of the Mercian kingdom, than did those dioceses further west and south (potentially meaning that its late thirteenth-century extent is less likely to perpetuate the pre- tenth-century situation than elsewhere in the West Midlands).[90]

It is also important to remember that lying behind the published edition of the Taxatio, produced by the Record Commission in 1802, is a complex corpus of more than 180 surviving copies or partial copies of the survey, of which 13 contain

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[89] Potential reasons for the paucity of early evidence for Lichfield diocese are set out in Chapter 7.2, pp. 242-44.

[90] This is despite the claims of Michelle Brown, who asserts that Lichfield was a 'prominent casualty' of the ninth-century Scandinavian raids, and that it was 'taken by the Vikings' at around this time: M.P. Brown, 'The Lichfield Angel and the Manuscript Context: Lichfield as a Centre of Insular Art', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 160 (2007), pp. 9 & 17.

extensive versions of the whole assessment of spiritualities. The printed edition of the Taxatio is based on three of these main texts, two of which include many later alterations, accretions and revisions, originating from 1294 and later (when the two copies in question were sent to the Exchequer). Indeed, Jeffrey Denton has argued that since the published Taxatio is therefore essentially a transcript of the exchequer copy, which itself was a copy of two late medieval versions of the survey, 'it is clear that the printed edition fails to provide a clear and accurate edition of the original assessment'.[91] Nor does the Taxatio give a description of the courses of diocesan boundaries in the late thirteenth century. Instead it records, diocese-by-diocese, the income of those churches worth more than six marks (£4) per annum.[92] Although the survey does not therefore mention every church in existence at the end of the thirteenth century, it nevertheless sets out the general outline of diocesan boundaries at that time: i.e. it is possible to check which churches, for example, belonged to the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield and which belonged to the neighbouring diocese of Worcester.

A similar exercise in comparing the layout of the West Midland shires in the late eleventh century and that of its dioceses in the late thirteenth has already been undertaken by Steven Bassett. Using the geography of the region's dioceses as a guide to that of its earlier provinces (having taken into account discoverable changes to the diocesan boundaries), he argues that 'provincial boundaries were comprehensively ignored only twice in the pre-Conquest layout [of shires]'. Bassett also says that 'since in both cases – Shropshire and Warwickshire – the future shire town lay

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[91] J.H. Denton, 'Towards a New Edition of the *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P Nicholai IV circa AD 1291*', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester*, 79 (1997), p. 69; Probert, 'Church and Landscape', pp. 29-30.

[92] In some dioceses, however, including parts of Coventry and Lichfield, churches whose income was as little as four marks were also recorded: J.H. Denton, 'The Valuation of the Ecclesiastical Benefices of England and Wales in 1291-2', *Historical Research*, 66 (1993), pp. 238-39, 244.

adjacent to a provincial boundary, to provide it with a coherent territory inevitably meant ignoring that boundary. Elsewhere the geography of the shires mainly conformed well to that of the provinces which preceded them'.[93]

Staffordshire fell wholly within the thirteenth-century diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, crossing into no other diocese. The boundaries of the two land-units, however, coincided only for a short distance, in the section of Staffordshire's boundary that was shared with Worcestershire. This can be seen by the fact that the churches of Handsworth, Kingswinford, Kinver and Tipton were part of Coventry and Lichfield diocese at the time of the Taxatio, located immediately north of its boundary with Worcester diocese. The manors of the same name were all part of Staffordshire in 1086, also located immediately north of the shire's boundary with Worcestershire.[94] Conversely, the churches of Dudley, Hagley, King's Norton, Northfield, Old Swinford and Wolverley were all part of Worcester diocese in the late thirteenth century, all located immediately south of its boundary with Coventry and Lichfield. Similarly, the manors of the same name were part of Worcestershire in 1086, and were situated immediately south of the boundary between Worcestershire and Staffordshire.[95]

The border between the dioceses of Hereford and Coventry and Lichfield also coincided with the western limits of the aforementioned block of land held by the Montgomerys in 1086, but which was later transferred to Shropshire, probably by 1102.[96] Although Domesday shire affiliations within this unit of land are uncertain, and so it is hard to tell whether Staffordshire's boundary *coincided* with the diocesan

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[93] Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', p. 155.
[94] *Taxatio*, p. 243; DB, ff. 246 (Kingswinford and Kinver), 247 (Tipton) & 250 (Handsworth); Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,1 (Kingswinford), 1,27 (Kinver), 2,22 (Tipton) & 12,29 (Handsworth).
[95] *Taxatio*, p. 217; DB, ff. 172 (King's Norton), 174 (Wolverley) & 177 (Dudley, Hagley, Northfield & Old Swinford); Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Worcs.*, 1,1a (King's Norton), 2,83 (Wolverley), 23,2 (Northfield), 23,9-23,11 (Hagley, Dudley & Old Swinford).
[96] See above, pp. 99-102.

one, there are no signs that the shire boundary crossed into Hereford diocese. This is because Upper Arley and Worfield churches (both in Staffordshire in 1086) were part of Coventry and Lichfield diocese in 1291, as was Quatt (whose Domesday entry appears in the Warwickshire folios).[97] Conversely, on the other side of the River Severn, which marked the western limits of much of this block of land, are a group of churches that were part of Hereford diocese in the late thirteenth century and part of Shropshire in 1086, such as Acton Round, Chetton, Cleobury North, Kinlet, Much Wenlock, Sidbury, Stottesdon and Willey.[98]

But Staffordshire comprised only part of Coventry and Lichfield diocese. The diocese also incorporated the northern half of Shropshire (taking in, for example, churches at Albrighton, Chetwynd, Hodnet and Shrewsbury),[99] and all of Cheshire (including Astbury, Middlewich, Neston, Prestbury, and Sandbach).[100] It also included some churches in Lancashire, such as at Manchester, Ormskirk, Warrington and Wigan – although the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Manchester was in Northumbria when Edward the Elder captured and fortified it in the second decade of the tenth century, and it was therefore presumably added to Lichfield diocese after that date.[101] The late thirteenth-century diocese also incorporated the whole of the Derbyshire at that shire's Domesday extent, as can be seen by the fact that the churches of Glossop, Hathersage, Dronfield, Clowne, Bolsover, Heanor, Ilkeston,

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[97] *Taxatio*, p. 243; DB, ff. 239 (Quatt), 247 (Upper Arley) & 248 (Worfield); Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 7,2 (Upper Arley) & 9,1 (Worfield); Plaister (ed.), *DB: Warwicks.*, 12,8.
[98] *Taxatio*, pp. 166-67; DB, ff. 252 (Much Wenlock), 254 (Acton Round, Chetton & Stottesdon), 257 (Sidbury), 258 (Willey) & 260 (Cleobury North & Kinlet); Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, 3c,2 (Much Wenlock), 4,1,30-31 (Stottesdon & Chetton), 4,3,6 (Acton Round), 4,11,7 (Sidbury), 4,19,11 (Willey), 6,9 (Kinlet) & 7,1 (Cleobury North).
[99] *Taxatio*, pp. 247-48. For discussion of the course of the diocesan boundary through Shropshire: Bassett, 'Medieval Ecclesiastical Organisation', pp. 14-17.
[100] *Taxatio*, p. 248.
[101] *Taxatio*, p. 249. For Manchester: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS. 'A', 919; J.M. Bately, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume III: MS A* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986), p. 69; D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents Volume I* c. *500-1042* (London: Eyre Methuen, 2nd edn, 1979), p. 217.

Sandiacre, Swarkestone, Melbourne and Hartshorne, all located close to Derbyshire's boundary with Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire or Yorkshire, were part of Coventry and Lichfield diocese. The diocese did not, however, extend any further east.[102] The eastern 'two-thirds' of Warwickshire, including churches at Nuneaton, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa, amongst very many others, was also incorporated within Coventry and Lichfield diocese. The western 'third' of Warwickshire, however, fell into Worcester's diocese.[103]

Consequently, Staffordshire's Domesday boundary did not follow a wholly random course in respect of and the late medieval boundary between the dioceses of Worcester and of Coventry and Lichfield. Indeed, the two boundaries coincided for a short distance, raising the possibility that the Staffordshire-Worcestershire boundary followed the general line of the boundary between the provinces of the Hwicce and the Mercians (although the extent of the late thirteenth-century diocese of Coventry and Lichfield cannot be proved to have reflected the extent of the Mercian province). This situation therefore provides no support for the view that Staffordshire was created on a 'blank slate', in a landscape in which existing administrative structures were ignored. But nor does it show that when Staffordshire was created, the course of its boundary was *determined* by pre-existing provincial arrangements. Moreover, other West Midland shires were divided between dioceses: it has already, for instance, been seen that Shropshire was dissected by the boundary between Coventry and

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[102] *Taxatio*, pp. 246-47. Mapping the boundary late thirteenth-century boundary of Coventry and Lichfield diocese onto the shire geography of 1086 is, however, more than usually difficult in the vicinity of Tamworth. Appleby, approximately seven miles north-east of Tamworth, was part of Lincoln diocese in 1291 and the manor of the same name appears to have been divided between Derbyshire and Leicestershire in 1086: *Taxatio*, p. 65; DB, ff. 231, 233 (Leicestershire) & 273 (Derbyshire); Morgan (ed.), *DB: Derbys.*, 3,2; *idem* (ed.), *Domesday Book: Leicestershire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1979) [hereafter *DB: Leics.*], 11,2 & 14,22. Ravenstone, situated around thirteen miles north-east of Tamworth and part of Coventry and Lichfield diocese in 1291, was similarly divided between the two shires at the time of Domesday Book: *Taxatio*, p. 247; DB, ff. 235 (Leicestershire) & 278 (Derbyshire); Morgan (ed.), *DB: Derbys.*, 14,8; *idem* (ed.), *DB: Leics.*, 26,1.

[103] *Taxatio*, pp. 241-42. Also: Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', pp. 160-64.

Lichfield and Hereford dioceses, and that Warwickshire was similarly divided between the dioceses of Worcester and Coventry and Lichfield. Yet this situation may be explained by the proximity of Shrewsbury and Warwick to a diocesan boundary, and we have seen that Steven Bassett has argued that in both cases the provincial boundary had to be ignored if Shrewsbury and Warwick were to be provided with coherent shire territories.[104] Stafford, however, was nowhere near a diocesan boundary, and so there are no grounds for thinking that providing it with a coherent territory would have meant ignoring the area's existing provincial geography. Indeed, the boundary between Staffordshire and Worcestershire could reasonably be interpreted in this context: being at least 15 miles distant from both Stafford and Worcester, the likely boundary between the provinces of the Hwicce and the Mercians could have formed a convenient boundary between Staffordshire and Worcestershire when shires were created in the West Midlands.

The original status of Derbyshire within Lichfield diocese, however, is less clear, because we know that Derby was under Scandinavian control in the second decade of the tenth century. We do not know what happened in this area when 'English' control was re-established in the East Midlands, in the second decade of the tenth century. Since the Mercian kingdom seems to have been focused on the upper Trent drainage basin, an area which incorporated much of southern Derbyshire, it seems certain that at least parts of the future shire had been within its diocese prior to the tenth century. But was the whole of the area which came to be known as Derbyshire? That is to say, if Lichfield *did* lose control of parts of its diocese in the later ninth or early tenth century – and the effects on the diocese of the partitioning of the Mercian kingdom in the later 870s are unknown – would everything that had been

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[104] Above, pp. 127-28.

lost simply have been restored to Lichfield following the re-establishment of 'English control'? Or, would Lichfield have tried to 'grab' as much land as it could once 'English' rule had been restored, meaning that its thirteenth-century diocese may have differed significantly in size from its pre-tenth-century one? To address these questions more fully we need to consider how much can be said about, firstly, the geographical extent of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands; secondly, how long that rule persisted; and, thirdly, how disruptive to administrative arrangements Scandinavian rule is likely to have been. This will be the subject of Chapter 6. For the time being, however, all that can be said is that because we know that parts of the late thirteenth-century diocese of Coventry and Lichfield had been under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the tenth century, we can be less certain that the diocese's pre-tenth-century extent is reflected in later medieval sources than is the case for those sees located further west and south.

4.6 Conclusions

So where does this leave us in terms of the hypotheses for Staffordshire's origins set out at the start of the chapter? There are no signs that the shire boundary followed a wholly random course in respect of either the natural landscape, or the area's pre-existing provincial geography. Nor is there any reason to believe that Staffordshire was a wholly coherent territory in respect of its boundary's relationship with the natural landscape. This leaves open the possibility that although using prominent landscape features for Staffordshire's boundary was desirable where possible, it was not the major criterion that determined the shire's extent. It also leaves open the two basic hypotheses for shire origins discussed throughout this thesis. These are that the region's shires were effectively created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in

which there were no existing sub-provincial territories, or in one in which existing administrative territories were ignored when the shire boundaries were first laid out; the other is that the West Midland shires reflect pre-existing land-units, or represent the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units. These issues will be considered once again in the next chapter, which investigates how the roles that Staffordshire served may have influenced its original territorial layout.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Introduction

It has been seen that most studies of shire origins in the West Midlands have been based on the hidage assessment that each shire carried at the time of Domesday Book, and so scholars have usually argued or implied that the layout of the region's shires was determined by geld quotas alone.[1] Yet shires were not merely 'tax districts'. In the eleventh century the region's shires fulfilled important military, administrative, judicial, and fiscal functions, and scholars have generally not considered whether these roles are likely, at least in part, to have determined the shires' original territorial layout. This chapter will therefore examine the roles that Staffordshire served and will explore how these functions may have influenced its territorial origins and early history.

5.2 The roles served by the West Midland shires

The extant law codes of the tenth and eleventh centuries provide clues towards some of the judicial, legal and administrative roles that Staffordshire, like the other shires of the West Midlands, served. III Edgar, for example, issued in the mid eleventh century, tells us that shire courts should meet twice a year and that '*ðar beo on þare scire biscop 7 se ealdorman, 7 ðar ægðer tæcan Godes riht ge worldriht*' ('the bishop and the ealdorman are to be present, and there to expound both the ecclesiastical and the secular law').[2] According to Henry Loyn, shire court meetings were 'public events, social as well as legal occasions. There was no judge present in the modern sense of

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[1] See Chapter 1.3.1.

[2] III Edgar 5.1 & 5.2. Old English: A.J. Robertson (ed.), *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), p. 26. Modern English translation: D. Whitlock (ed.), *English Historical Documents Volume I* c. *500-1042* (London: Eyre Methuen, 2nd edn, 1979) [hereafter *EHD I*], p. 433.

the word. Earls and bishops, or their representatives, presided, and decisions were arrived at by the suitors who declared the law'.[3] Law codes also make clear that shires were both institutions and territories, with each shire court seeming to have jurisdiction over a defined territory. Athelstan's code issued at Grateley, for example, stipulates that 'if any landless man took service in another shire, and afterwards returns to his kinsmen, he [any kinsman] is to harbour him [only] on condition that he brings him to justice if he commits any offence there, or he is to pay compensation on his behalf.'[4]

Informative though law codes are, they shed no light on the layout of either Athelstan's or Edgar's shires. While the codes imply that each shire court served a discrete territory, and that the boundaries of such territories were known (to the relevant shire court at least), they provide no specific detail on actual territorial arrangements. Furthermore, since we cannot be certain that shires existed in the West Midlands before the early eleventh century, i.e. some fifty years after the latest code in question, III Edgar, was promulgated, we do not know whether the codes relate to the former Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia, or to Wessex alone (although there is no reason to believe that in either case the shire court operated differently in the West Midlands than in the south of England). More importantly still, our extant law codes are, unsurprisingly, primarily concerned with 'civil' and judicial matters, and thus reveal little about the military role of the shire – a role which, as we shall see, may have impinged more directly on the early territorial layout of shires in the West Midlands than did the shires' other functions.

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[3] H.R. Loyn, *The Governance of Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), p. 139.
[4] II Athelstan, 8; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 419. Old English: '*gif hwylc londleas mon folgode on opre scire 7 eft his mægas gesece, þæt he hine on þa gerad feormige, ðæt he hine to folcryhte læde, gif þær gylt gewyrce, oþþe forebete*': F.L. Attenborough (ed.), *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 132.

By the early eleventh century the shire was the most important unit of military organisation throughout England. By this time the English *fyrd*, i.e. 'levy' or 'army', was, by and large, organised according to shires, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle implies on numerous occasions that each shire had a *fyrd* of its own, with each *fyrd* therefore responsible for the defence of the shire territory in question.[5] In 1001, for example, the Chronicle records that a *fyrd* consisting of Devon and Somerset *folces* ('folk' or 'people') met at Pinhoe in Devon, and fought a Danish *here* ('army' or 'host').[6] Similarly in 1003 we hear that a Danish army's incursion into Wiltshire resulted in a 'great' *fyrd* being gathered from Wiltshire and Hampshire. The exercise, however, was ultimately unsuccessful, and by 1010 the Chronicle records that '*ne furðon nan scir nolde oþre gelæstan æt nextan*' ('no shire would even help the next').[7] While all of these examples, once again, relate to the south of England there is no reason to think that the situation was different for the Midland shires: in 1065, for instance, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle refers to the forces or levies belonging to Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.[8] Indeed, the relationship between a shire town and its dependent territory seems to have been a reciprocal one. In 1086

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[5] C.W. Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions on the Eve of the Norman Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 91-93.

[6] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle [hereafter ASC], MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1001. MS. 'C' records that '*Þa gesomnede man þær ormæte fyrde defenisces folces 7 sumersætisces folces, 7 hi ða tosomne common æt Peonnho*' with very similar accounts provided by MSS 'D' and 'E': K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume V: MS. C* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*], p. 89; G.P. Cubbin (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VI: MS D* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*], p. 51; S. Irvine (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VII: MS. E* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*], p. 63. For a modern English translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, pp. 237-38.

[7] In 1003 manuscripts 'C', 'D' and 'E' record that a '*micle* [sic] *fyrde of Wiltinscire 7 of Hamtunscire*' was gathered: ASC, MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1003; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 90; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 51; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 64; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 239. For 1010: *ASC*, MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1010; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 95; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 56; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 68; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 243.

[8] ASC, MSS 'D' & 'E', 1001; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 78; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 86; D. Whitelock (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 138. For a list of specific references to shires with their own *fyrd*: Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions*, p. 92, n. 1.

memories were still strong in one shire at least of the obligation laid on its inhabitants to maintain the shire town's defences, as Domesday Book records that one man used to be called out from each hide in Cheshire to repair Chester's wall and bridge (although the regularity with which this obligation was imposed is not specified).[9]

Such a military role seems very likely, in theory at least, to have influenced the layout of the West Midland region's shires. If each shire town was responsible for the defence of a dependent territory, then it would make sense for each of those territories to be coherent and of a suitable size: that is to say, if such a military system was to work in practice, then there would seem little point in making any shire town responsible for the defence of a territory so large that its military role could not be fulfilled.

The obligation on landholders to provide men for the maintenance of fortified places was not new at the end of the eleventh century. In 1971 Nicholas Brooks authoritatively demonstrated that from the mid-eighth century onwards charters record the existence a general obligation laid on those holding land to supply men at regular intervals for military service and for the construction and repair of fortified places[10] and bridges.[11] Indeed, whilst a manor might be granted immunity from

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[9] Domesday Book [hereafter DB], f. 262; P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Cheshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978) [hereafter *DB: Cheshire*], C21.

[10] Old English *burh* is often adopted into modern English as a loan-word, but this is problematic. The word had a wide semantic range in Old English and so 'the unfocused nature of the word is dangerous if the modern author has in mind a particular aspect of "burh" which is unstated': D.H. Hill & A.R Rumble, 'Introduction', in D.H. Hill & A.R. Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex: The Burghal Hidage and Anglo-Saxon Fortifications* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 3. Steven Bassett has recently translated *burh* as 'fortified place', and this translation is likewise adopted here. Bassett argues that 'although "fortified place" is cumbersome, it is preferable to "fortress", "fortification" or "fort", all of which are often assumed to denote a place which was not permanently settled and which, whenever it was settled, had few or no civilians among its occupants. A translation of *burh* is needed which comfortably includes pre-existing civilian settlements to which defences had been added as well as fortified sites of exclusively military origin': S.R. Bassett, 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), p. 58, n. 14. For an important new discussion of the meanings of *burh* as used in place-names and contemporary written sources of the middle Anglo-Saxon period: J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 249-51, 269-70, 287-89.

providing other services, it rarely escaped from the *trimoda necessitas* (the 'threefold obligation' or 'common burden').[12] The earliest undoubtedly genuine charters reserving the 'threefold obligation' occur in a Mercian rather than a West Saxon or Kentish context, although we can be certain that the West Saxons were making similar reservations in their charters by the mid ninth century.[13]

Steven Bassett has argued that by the end of the eighth century the 'threefold obligation' was a widespread burden within the whole area that the Mercian kings ruled, and has proposed that it formed the basis of a 'conscious programme of military organisation' which, he says, was 'almost certainly the prototype of the better known burghal system employed by Alfred in Wessex in the late ninth century, and by his children, Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd, over the rest of England south of the Humber'.[14] This model may have important implications for our understanding of Staffordshire's origins and so the remainder of the chapter will assess its viability in relation to the Staffordshire area. But in order to do so, it is first necessary to set out the evidential basis of the model in some detail.

As a result of the efforts of Alfred and his children, a network of fortified places existed throughout southern and central England by the early 920s. In western Mercia, for instance, we know the Mercian ealdorman Æthelred and his wife, the aforementioned Æthelflæd (and subsequently Æthelflæd alone after her husband's

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[11] N.P. Brooks, 'The Development of Military Obligations in Eighth- and Ninth-Century England', in P. Clemoes & K. Hughes (eds), *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 69-84. Also: Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', pp. 57-58.

[12] The reservation of the 'threefold obligation' from immunities may have resulted from a realisation by kings that they had previously alienated too much land and that land 'without being the source of military obligation, was the expected reward for loyal military service': Brooks, 'The Development', pp. 74-75.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 76 & 81.

[14] S.R. Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', in N.P. Brooks & C. Cubitt (eds), *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 155-57; *idem*, 'Divide and Rule?' p. 58.

death in 911), built defences at Worcester (889x99),[15] *Brycg* (probably Quatford, 912), Tamworth, Stafford (913), Eddisbury, Warwick (914), Chirbury and Runcorn (915). *Bremesbyrig* (910), *Scergeat* (912), and *Weardbyrig* (915), currently unidentified, were also provided with defences,[16] and there is circumstantial evidence that defences were built at five other places too, including Winchcombe.[17]

Reviewing the published reports of excavations on the Anglo-Saxon defences at Hereford, Tamworth and Winchcombe, Bassett argues that there is firm evidence of a pre-Æthelflædan defensive circuit in these places which dates from the middle Anglo-Saxon period – one, that is, not mentioned by contemporary written sources. While the presence of such circuits had already been posited by a number of scholars, the necessary work had previously not been done to establish the reality of their existence, mainly because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence, and also because the first-phase defences were overlain and very badly disturbed: firstly by what Æthelred and/or Æthelflæd did in the early tenth century, and then by improvements made to the defences.[18] He argues that although there is no direct dating evidence for the first-phase defences at Hereford, Tamworth and Winchcombe, it is nevertheless 'most unlikely that they could have been of a later date than the early ninth century, since otherwise insufficient time would have been available, between their construction and the construction of those of the period of Æthelred and Æthelflæd, to allow for sub-aerial weathering and deterioration to occur on the scale recorded' at

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[15] S 223 (BCS 579); Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, pp. 540-41.
[16] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 910-915; S. Taylor (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume IV: MS B* [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*] (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983), pp. 49-50; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 75; Whitelock (ed.) *EHD I*, pp. 210-13.
[17] The other four being Chester, Gloucester, Hereford and Shrewsbury: Bassett, 'Divide and Rule', p. 58, n. 16.
[18] For example, Bassett says that 'too little of Hereford's [middle Anglo-Saxon defences] survived for any worthwhile comparison to be possible' with those at Winchcombe and Tamworth: *ibid.*, p. 61-77. For further discussion of the excavators' views on the first-phase defences at Tamworth: below pp. 159-64.

those sites.[19] He also argues that the middle Anglo-Saxon defences at Tamworth and Winchcombe shared sufficient similarities to make it seem that they may have been built to a standard design. He thinks it unlikely that these three places were the only ones within the West Midland region to be provided with defences in the eighth or early ninth century (although with only three adequately excavated and published cases Bassett notes that the similarities between Tamworth and Winchcombe may be merely coincidental).[20]

Bassett notes that by itself the archaeological evidence demonstrates only that fortifications were built at some major Mercian centres in the eighth or early ninth century: it does not show that the Mercian kings built such fortifications throughout their kingdom; nor does it prove that these fortified places constituted a kingdom-wide policy of defence. But he points out that from the mid eighth century onwards Mercian charters referred to the obligation on the landholders to supply men to undertake the 'threefold obligation', which, as we have seen, provided for the construction and maintenance of fortified places, and says that 'if people were required to do it, fortified places must have existed at which the work was to be done'. Indeed, given the wide geographical distribution throughout the Mercian kingdom of the lands upon which this obligation was laid, he argues that 'we may reasonably conclude that there were many such places', which constituted 'a formally coordinated military infrastructure'.[21] Bassett proposes that this kingdom-wide policy of defence is therefore unlikely to have been confined to the West Midlands and that,

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[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77. Bassett argues that 'in each case the rampart and associated features were securely located in the stratigraphical sequence below archaeological layers and features which together comprised a distinct later defensive work which can be reliably dated to the period in which Æthelred and Æthelflæd, and then the latter alone, are said to have built fortifications in western Mercia': *ibid.*, p. 74. The absence of direct evidence of when the first-phase defences were constructed likewise 'led those who reported on the excavation of them to be cautious in discussing their date of origin: *ibid.*, p. 77.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 81

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

amongst others, Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham and Stamford may have been provided with similar defences by the early ninth century.[22]

This model has direct consequences for the study of Staffordshire's origins. Bassett proposes that each fortified place probably had a reciprocal arrangement with its hinterland (similar to the one that Domesday Book describes at Chester).[23] Each hinterland would probably have contained many manors from which men were taken at regular intervals to do routine military duties and to maintain the fortified place's defences. As a result of this, however, every part of the kingdom would likewise have a 'local militia' to protect it.[24] Indeed, as we saw in the introduction, Bassett believes that the layout of the West Midland shires portrayed in Domesday Book reflects that of the region's former military hinterlands. The initial role of these territories would have been purely military, but, he argues, they subsequently acquired the administrative, judicial, and economic responsibilities that we know belonged to the West Midland shires by the early eleventh century.[25] He does not, however, argue that the layout of the region's late eleventh-century shires would have perpetuated that of the earlier territories in every particular: he feels that major disruptions are likely to have been caused by, amongst other things, the 'building of defences in the late ninth and early tenth centuries at places that had not been fortified before, and the setting up of (sometimes only short-lived) territories from which each derived its manpower'. He argues that such disruptions would also have been caused by the dissolution of

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[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 77-80. These places are commonly referred to as the 'five boroughs' of the Danelaw, a term first used in 942: ASC, MS 'A', 942; J.M. Bately (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition: Volume III: MS A* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986) [hereafter: *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*], p. 73.
[23] See above, p. 137.
[24] Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', pp. 82-83.
[25] *Idem*, 'The Administrative Landscape', p. 157; 'Divide and Rule?', pp. 83-84, n. 76.

Winchcombeshire in the early eleventh century and by the decision that Tamworth should not become a shire town.[26]

The chapter will now assess whether there are any signs that the military system proposed by Bassett's operated in the Staffordshire area. To do so, it will investigate what is known, or can be inferred, about tenth-century and earlier military organisation in and around Staffordshire. The chapter will explore whether the available evidence provides any clues towards the layout of the area's putative pre-existing military districts, and therefore whether conclusions can be drawn about how far such arrangements are likely to have influenced the shire's territorial origins and early development. Of all the places in the West Midlands fortified during the Anglo-Saxon period, *Brycg*, Stafford and Tamworth are the most likely to have potentially influenced Staffordshire's early history and development due to their proximity to the late eleventh-century shire. It will be seen that Quatford, situated around two miles south-east of the modern Bridgnorth, is the most likely location of the defences which the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records were built at *Brycg*.[27] Quatford is on the western boundary of a block of land which bordered Shropshire in 1086, and which we saw in Chapter 4 was either wholly within Staffordshire at the time of the Domesday survey, or was divided between that shire and Warwickshire, but which was later transferred to Shropshire, probably by 1102.[28] It was likewise seen in Chapter 4 that the Domesday boundary between Staffordshire and Warwickshire almost undoubtedly dissected Tamworth.[29] Stafford is situated almost in the centre of its shire, as depicted on Map 16.

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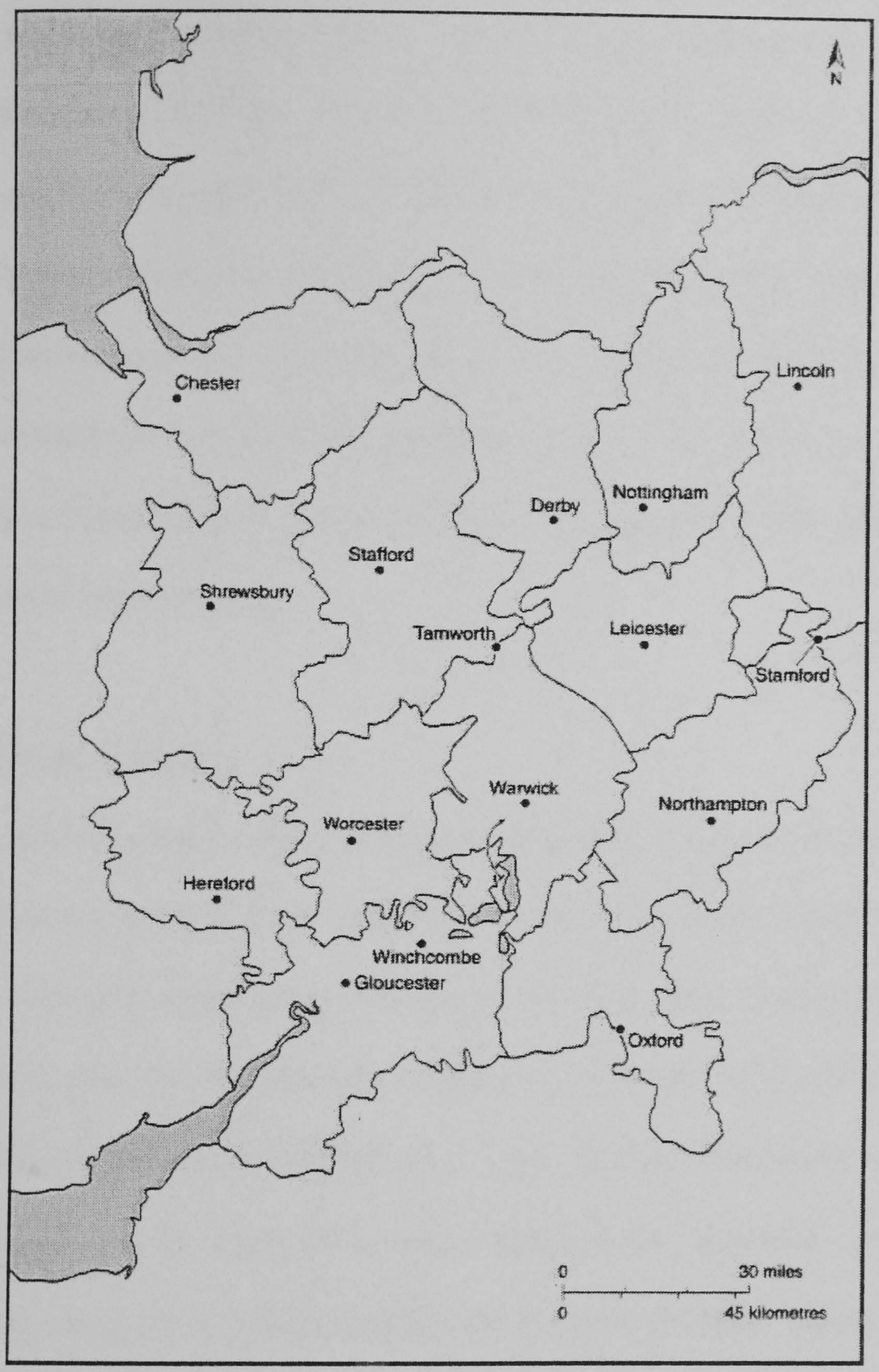
[26] Other events, such as the eleventh-century dissolution of Winchcombeshire, would likewise have caused disruptions to these territorial arrangements: *idem*, 'Divide and Rule?', p. 84, n. 76.
[27] Below, pp. 154-58.
[28] See Chapter 4.2, pp. 99-102.
[29] See Chapter 4.3.4, p. 111.



Map 16: Shires in midland England in 1086. Small detached portions of Worcestershire are shown shaded

Source: S.R. Bassett, 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), p. 60

If it were possible to gain an impression of the likely extents of the putative military hinterlands belonging to these places, then these could be compared with that of the late eleventh-century shire.[30] Consequently, we might be able to assess whether, for example, Staffordshire is likely to have comprised the whole of any military hinterlands of all three places (seemingly unlikely since two of them, *Brycg* and Tamworth, are situated either directly on, or just over, Staffordshire's boundary); or if, in its late eleventh-century form, the shire bore very little resemblance to the military districts which may have preceded it; or, finally, if the shire seems likely to have incorporated all of Stafford's military territory, but only parts of those areas belonging to Bridgnorth and Tamworth (with the remainder of their hinterlands lying within neighbouring shires).[31]

5.3 The Burghal Hidage

The most obvious place to start in such an investigation would be the Burghal Hidage. This is the name given by F.W. Maitland to several manuscripts whose exemplar was probably originally compiled in Wessex in the early tenth century. The document exists in two main versions (hereafter referred to as 'A' and 'B'), and lists 33 fortified places, stating how many hides belong to each. The fortified places in question are mainly located in the south of England, although an 'appendix', associated with Version B, includes a hidage assessment for two fortified places in the West Midlands: Worcester and Warwick.[32] The two versions generally assign the same

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[30] It would also be important to have an accurate sense of the dates of the first phase defences at these three sites: that is to say, whether or not all three were provided with defences, and, arguably, military territories, in the middle Anglo-Saxon period. This is discussed below, pp. 153-69.

[31] Steven Bassett argues that Tamworth's military hinterland would probably have been shared out between Stafford, Warwick and Derby, and probably Leicester too: Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', pp. 155-56.

[32] F.W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond: Three Essays in the Early History of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), pp. 187-88, 455, 502-06. Also: D.H. Hill, 'The

number of hides to each fortified place, although sometimes a place appears in one version but not in the other (for example, Wareham and the unidentified *Brydian*, assigned 1,600 and 760 hides respectively in Version A make no appearance in Version B; likewise Worcester and Warwick appear only in the 'appendix' which is associated with Version B).[33]

A calculation appears at the end of Version A which has attracted considerable attention from modern scholars because it provides a formula which seems to explain how to calculate the number of hides needed to supply and man a defensive circuit.[34] This calculation could, conceivably, be applied to Anglo-Saxon defensive circuits in the Staffordshire area, in order to gain an impression of the number of hides which would be needed to supply each fortified place. While this would not show the actual boundaries of their military hinterlands, it might at least provide some clues to the relative size of the districts for which each place was militarily responsible, and could also throw light on the *raison d'être* of Staffordshire's original hidage total.[35] Nevertheless, although it has been seen that the calculation has applied to shire towns in the West Midlands, unfortunately there are a number of reasons why this exercise would produce no reliable results.[36]

Burghal Hidage: The Establishment of a Text', *Medieval Archaeology*, 13 (1969), p. 84; Hill & Rumble, 'Introduction', p. 1.

[33] For a table summarising the West Saxon fortified places appearing in each version and the hidage totals attached to them: N.P. Brooks, 'The West Saxon Hidage and the "Appendix"', in Hill & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, p. 88.

[34] For an edition of the Burghal Hidage: A.R. Rumble, 'An Edition and Translation of the Burghal Hidage, together with Recension C of the Tribal Hidage', in Hill & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, pp. 14-35. For the calculation in question see p. 30 with a modern English translation by Rumble at p. 34. The calculation begins '*to anes æceres bræde on þealstillinge 7 to þære þære gebirigeað...*' (translated by Rumble as 'for the establishment of a wall of one acre's breadth, and for its "defence"...').

[35] This is also discussed in Chapter 3.

[36] See Chapter 1.3.1, pp. 12-13.

Firstly, the Burghal Hidage has a complex textual history, which makes the use of Version A's calculation problematic. The exemplar for the surviving text of Version A was filed in the Cotton Library under Otho B.xi, which was unfortunately one of those manuscript collections badly damaged in the fire at the library of October 1731, resulting in the greater part of Version A's exemplar being lost.[37] But we can still gain a good impression of its contents because a pre-fire transcript of the manuscript survives, one of many such transcriptions made by the sixteenth-century antiquary Laurence Nowell, in this case dated 1562. It is possible to assess the likely accuracy of Nowell's transcription because some can be checked against surviving manuscripts. While scholars view his transcriptions as essentially accurate, especially by the standards of his day, studies of his transcriptions have revealed numerous errors, particular in relation to spelling.[38] Consequently, a recent study of the Burghal Hidage manuscripts by Alexander Rumble has concluded that the Nowell text 'may not be a letter-for-letter true record of what was in Otho B.xi'[39] – a caveat that we need to keep in mind when using Version A's calculation. (It should be said, however, that this is an issue that needs to be borne in mind when using *any* manuscript which does not survive in its original form, as errors and omissions can be introduced whenever a copy is made: the problem may therefore simply be more obvious here than usual because no medieval version of the manuscript survives.)

More importantly, however, we do not know the date and purpose of the Burghal Hidage and, divorced of its original context, we will probably only ever be able to speculate on the matter. Most scholars feel that the document was originally compiled in the early tenth century, probably because, apart from those with a Roman

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[37] A.R. Rumble, 'The Known Manuscripts of the Burghal Hidage', in Hill & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, pp. 38-39.
[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

defensive circuit, the places listed within it are not thought to have been provided with defences before the reign of Alfred the Great (871-899).[40] For instance, David Hill argues that the Burghal Hidage was intended for practical use and believes that it describes the actual number of hides attached to many of the fortified places in question; the implication of this view being that Version A's calculation was actually used when defences were built in Wessex.[41] Hill has applied the formula in Version A's calculation to the hidage totals recorded in the Burghal Hidage to see what the resultant lengths of defensive circuits would be. He has compared these figures to the lengths of those circuits whose courses have been established, and argues that the length of the late medieval defensive circuits of some, most notably Winchester, demonstrates a very close correlation to the length of walls that would be supported by the hidage totals recorded for the same places in the Burghal Hidage.[42] Indeed, Hill suggests that lengths of the defensive circuits of the majority of the Burghal Hidage's fortified places are very close to what the calculation implies that they should be.[43]

Unfortunately, applying the formula included in Version A's calculation to known defensive circuits is much less straightforward than Hill implies. Firstly, the late Anglo-Saxon defensive circuits belonging to places mentioned within the document have not all been identified, which means that we cannot always check

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[40] Hill & Rumble, 'Introduction', p. 2.

[41] D.H. Hill, 'The Calculation and the Purpose of the Burghal Hidage', in Hill & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, pp. 93-94. Hill has applied the formula to the West Midlands, attempting to calculate the likely lengths of the defensive circuits at each of the region's shire towns on the basis of the shires' Domesday hidage assessments and those recorded in the County Hidage: *idem*, 'The Shiring of Mercia – Again', in N.J. Higham & D.H. Hill (eds), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 144-59; also: Chapter 1.3.1, pp. 12-13.

[42] For example: quoting from A.J. Robertson's published edition of the Burghal Hidage (A.J. Robertson (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1956), p. 495) Hill notes that 'the medieval wall at Winchester, which probably followed the line of the Roman wall, was about 3280 yards in length . . . the 2400 hides of the Burghal Hidage would give, according to the specifications which follow, a wall of 3300 yards in length. The two figures are strikingly close': *idem*, 'The Calculation', in Hill & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, p. 92. Hill also argues that 'the hidation [relates] to the wall length in some cases, so much so that, at least in the example of Christchurch, it was able to be used to locate the wall, a wall that was demonstrated to be the tenth-century circuit': *ibid.*, p. 94.

[43] *Idem*, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England 700-1066* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 85.

whether the calculation matches the situation on the ground. Moreover, the lengths of circuits calculated using the Burghal Hidage rarely match the lengths of known defensive circuits as neatly as at Winchester, and Nicholas Brooks cites a number of places listed within the document where the circuit length provided by Version A's calculation differs significantly from that of the actual length of the Roman or Anglo-Saxon defensive circuits (using the Roman defences because it is thought that the Roman and later circuits were essentially the same).[44] Furthermore, there is no straightforward way of applying the calculation to real defensive circuits, even where their courses are known, and, in the words of Brooks, 'much interpretation and many favourable assumptions are necessary to achieve [a neat] result', a point recently made by Hill himself.[45] How, for instance, should the Burghal Hidage's calculation be applied to a site where part of the defensive circuit appears to have been formed by a natural feature, such as a river? Was that section of the circuit also provided with ramparts, and, even if not, would it nevertheless have been supplied and manned in the same way as those parts which had 'walls'? Some of the defensive circuits belonging to places listed within the Burghal Hidage which adjoin rivers 'fit' the circuit length calculated using Version A's formula only if the river side is excluded[46] – but is it likely that this part of the defended area would be left apparently unmanned and unsupplied? After all, many of the places in question were probably provided

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[44] For example, Brooks argues that 'at Chichester the Roman walls are 2600 yards in length, yet the hidage figure of 1500 provides for only 2022 yards. At Porchester 500 hides should imply 687 yards of wall, but the rectangular walls of the Saxon Shore fort are 813 yards long': N.P. Brooks, 'The Administrative Background to the Burghal Hidage' in Hill & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, p. 130.

[45] *Ibid.* On this point Hill says that 'one of the problems may be that the Burghal Hidage statistics have been approached as a puzzle to "solve", and the desire for "solutions" has drawn many scholars into circular arguments or even wish fulfilment. All such "solutions" must be tested with rigour. I do not say this lightly as I have published a number of Burghal Hidage notes and articles where the speculative nature of my "conclusions" was not fully admitted': Hill, 'The Burghal Hidage as a Document', in Hill & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, p.80. Also: *idem*, 'The Shiring', p. 158, where Hill notes that 'one can make figures fit almost anything'.

[46] *Idem*, 'The Nature of the Figures', in *idem* & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, pp. 82-83.

with defences in response to Scandinavian raiding in the ninth century, i.e. in response to an enemy that was mobile and fast-moving, and one that made extensive use of rivers.

Ultimately, however, it would be unwise to apply the Burghal Hidage's formula to fortified places in the Staffordshire area without knowing its original purpose. Brooks suggests that the document may have been compiled in one of three contexts: it might describe an actual scheme instigated by Alfred or Edward the Elder for the defence of their kingdom; it could describe arrangements long enforced, but which had been intermittently and incompletely updated over a generation or more; or it could have been 'a "paper scheme" prepared by some ambitious administrator in an idle moment, but which was never actually adopted'.[47] The document could also conceivably describe a scheme devised for and applied at Winchester, but not extended to the rest of the West Saxon kingdom (an explanation which would account for the close 'fit' between Version A's calculation and the length of the Roman defences at Winchester). Indeed, if a clearer picture of the probable uses of Version A's calculation is to emerge, then the locations and courses of more of the document's late Anglo-Saxon defensive circuits needs to be established. Comparing these to lengths of defensive circuits provided by the calculation may move us closer to understanding whether or not the Burghal Hidage describes a scheme that was consistently applied, an 'idealised' plan which was adapted to fit circumstances on the ground, or merely a 'paper scheme' that was never enacted.[48]

More problematic still is the fact that that Burghal Hidage appears to have been compiled in a West Saxon, rather than a Mercian, context. Even if we knew that

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[47] Brooks, 'The Administrative Background', p. 128.
[48] This is implied by Brooks when he says that 'the Burghal Hidage figures have the appearance of a very mixed bag of individual decisions reflecting differing military and administrative needs': Brooks, 'The Administrative Background', p. 131.

it was a 'working document' used in the West Saxon kingdom to calculate the number of hides to be attached to fortified places, there is no reason to assume that its calculation was likewise applied to the West Midlands. Indeed, although two fortified places in that region are listed in the 'appendix' to Version B, we should still not assume that the document's formula was really used to calculate the number of hides attached to fortified places in the West Midlands.

Two attempts have been made by scholars to apply Version A's calculation to the 1,200 hides assigned by the 'appendix' to Worcester and the 2,400 hides assigned to Warwick. At Worcester, for example, Philip Barker noted that applying Version A's calculation to the figure of 1,200 hides would provide for ramparts of 1,650 yards, but did not attempt to reconstruct a defensive circuit on the basis of this figure.[49] Alternatively, the late Anglo-Saxon defensive circuit at Worcester proposed by Nigel Baker and Richard Holt, reconstructed on the basis of topographical analysis of Worcester's city centre and (admittedly scanty) archaeological evidence, is significantly shorter than 1,650 yards.[50] But until Worcester's circuit is reconstructed more fully there is little way of assessing reliably whether it bore any resemblance to the rampart length derived from applying Version A's formula to the hidage total recorded for Worcester in the 'appendix' to Version B.[51]

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[49] P. Barker, *The Origins of Worcester: An Interim Survey* (Transactions of the Worcester Archaeological Society, 3rd Series, 2, 1968-69), p. 39.

[50] N. Baker & R. Holt, *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church: Gloucester and Worcester* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). For discussion of the likely extent of the late Anglo-Saxon defended area: pp. 133, 162-63, 165-70, 172-73, 176-79, 184-85, 187, 206-07, 210-11, 297-98, 335-36, 347-58 & 367-69.

[51] The extent of the late Anglo-Saxon defended area is yet to be fully established. For example, it has not been possible to reconstruct the north-eastern corner of the late Anglo-Saxon defensive circuit: see, for instance, the maps in *ibid.* at pp. 167 & 189. For the recent Deansway excavations, which have uncovered a section of what may be a section of Worcester's late ninth-century defences: Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?'; p. 62; H. Dalwood & R. Edwards (eds), *Excavations at Deansway, Worcester, 1988-89: Romano-British Small Town to Late Medieval City* (Council for British Archaeology, Research Report 139, 2004), pp. 55-56, 59, 219-24. No earlier defences were found underneath the late Anglo-Saxon ones.

At Warwick, on the other hand, it has been argued that the Burghal Hidage's figure of 2,400 hides is not a reliable guide to the length of its late Anglo-Saxon defensive circuit. Using the formula included in Version A's calculation, E. Klingelhöfer argued that such a hidage assessment would provide for a defensive circuit of 3,300 yards, a length which he dismissed on the basis that the defended area would be larger than that of the late medieval town at its greatest extent. Having reconstructed a possible course for Warwick's late Anglo-Saxon defences based on the town's modern street plan, Klingelhöfer suggested that a total of approximately 1,200 hides, as at Worcester, would have been a more appropriate assessment for Warwick,[52] although his hypothesis remains to be tested by excavation.[53]

There are, in any case, reasons for thinking that Version B's 'appendix' was not actually part of the original Burghal Hidage document at all, and therefore that the inclusion of Worcester and Warwick in the 'appendix' should not be taken to mean that Version A's formula was applied to fortified places in the West Midlands. Version B of the Burghal Hidage is found in seven manuscripts, for which it is thought there was a common archetype. In all seven manuscripts the Burghal Hidage text is presented immediately after Recension C of the Tribal Hidage, forming a composite document which is usually given the title *De numero hydarum Anglie in Britannia* ('the number of hides in England in Britain'), perhaps so-named because the original compiler saw that he was dealing with two documents concerning hidage assessments, but did not realise that they were of quite different origin.[54] *De numero hydarum* is ordered structured in the following way: (1) Recension C of the Tribal

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[52] E. Klingelhöfer, 'Evidence of Town Planning in Late Saxon Warwick', *Midland History*, 3 (1976), pp. 2-8, with discussion of the Burghal Hidage at p. 8.
[53] P. Rahtz, 'The Archaeology of West Mercian Towns', in A. Dornier (ed.), *Mercian Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 116. For further discussion of Warwick's Anglo-Saxon defences: below, pp. 166-67.
[54] Rumble, 'The Known Manuscripts', pp. 45-47. For further discussion of the Tribal Hidage: Chapter 4.5.1.

Hidage; (2) Version B of the Burghal Hidage; (3) a statement regarding the number of hides allotted to fortified places in the preceding list (calculated by the compiler to be 27,070); (4) a statement regarding the number of hides assigned to the West Saxons (30,000); and (5), a statement regarding Worcester and Warwick, which are assigned 1,200 and 2,400 hides respectively.[55]

Nicholas Brooks has compared *de numero hydarum* to Recension A of the Tribal Hidage, i.e. that document's earliest known manuscript, copied out in the early eleventh century, and found that there are significant differences between the two Tribal Hidage lists. For instance, d*e numero hydarum* omits the West Saxons from the southern peoples assigned large round numbers of hides at the end of Recension A; in Recension A 100,000 hides are assigned to the West Saxons, but in *de numero hydarum* this figure is attributed to the South Saxons instead. Brooks argues that to make up for this (probably deliberate) omission the original compiler of *de numero hydarum* transcribed the Burghal Hidage list, which provided more detailed information on Wessex than was included in the Tribal Hidage. Brooks argues further that the compiler assigned 30,000 hides to that kingdom because this was the most appropriate round figure close to the 27,070 which the compiler had calculated for the fortified places listed within the Burghal Hidage.[56] 'There is', says Brooks, 'a rough and ready sense in the compiler's handling of his texts. He sought to provide as much detail as was available to him about English hidages. This involved copying the Tribal Hidage, but deleting its information about Wessex and crudely adjusting its total because he had fuller information in the Burghal Hidage. It is therefore clear that the statement that 30,000 hides belong to the West Saxons and the figures for Worcester and Warwick do not belong to the Burghal Hidage at all'. Indeed, Brooks suggests

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[55] For the layout of *de numero hydarum*: Brooks, 'The West Saxon Hidage', p. 91.
[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91.

that they are more likely to be late supplements to the Tribal Hidage, made either to bring the West Saxon total to *c.* 30,000 hides, or to fill a perceived gap in the South-West Midlands.[57] Thus, although the original purpose of the Burghal Hidage is unknown, Brooks has provided very good reasons for thinking that Worcester and Warwick are unlikely to have been part of the original Burghal Hidage document.[58] Their inclusion in Version B therefore provides no grounds to believe that the calculation that appears in Version A were applied to fortified places in the West Midlands.

Finally, even if we were to assume that the Burghal Hidage was a 'working document' describing a real scheme that operated in a similar way throughout Wessex and Western Mercia, there is no guarantee that the units of measurement employed by the document – the pole and the furlong – were standardised in both places. This is a problem because any attempt to use the formula in Version A's to calculate the likely number of hides attached to fortified places in the West Midlands depends upon our ability to convert wall lengths into hidage figures accurately. The pole seems to have been the same length as the rod and perch, and by the mid thirteenth century was equivalent to five-and-a-half modern yards; a furlong, on the other hand, was equivalent to 40 perches (and therefore to 220 yards).[59] Although these units of linear measurement appear to have remained largely unchanged from the thirteenth century onwards, this does not mean that they were likewise stable between the early tenth

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[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92. There is, however, disagreement over whether the compiler of *de numero hydarum* intended to assign 30,000 hides to Wessex. David Hill argues that the original compiler of the document may have intended to assign 30 fortified places to Wessex rather than 30,000 hides: D.H. Hill, 'The Calculation', in *idem* & Rumble (eds), *The Defence of Wessex*, pp. 93 & 97, n. 3. His view is based on the fact that a horizontal line which appears above the figure of '30', and which converts that figure into thousands, is not included in all the surviving Version B manuscripts. Alexander Rumble, however, provides compelling grounds for reading the figure as 30,000: A.R. Rumble, 'Diplomatic Sub-Sections', in *ibid.*, p. 72.

[58] David Hill sees the 'appendix' to Version B as part of a 'working document', used to calculate the number of hides attached to Warwick and Worcester: Hill, 'The Calculation', pp. 93-94.

[59] P. Grierson, *English Linear Measurements: An Essay in Origins* (Stenton Lecture for 1971, 1972), pp. 14-15.

century and 1200. Furthermore, there is evidence of regional variation in the lengths of certain units of measurement of the same name in the late Middle Ages: the perch, for example, often seems to have been used imprecisely throughout the late medieval period.[60] Consequently, while there is no way of knowing whether these units of measurement were used in a similarly imprecise way in the late Anglo-Saxon period, the late medieval situation suggests that we cannot assume that they were standardised throughout England at the time of the Burghal Hidage's original compilation.

To sum up, the Burghal Hidage's formula cannot be used reliably to calculate the number of hides attached to fortified places in the Staffordshire area, or in the West Midland region. The document was compiled for an unknown purpose and, apparently, in a West Saxon context, and therefore applying it to the West Midlands as a 'working document' is not justified, as to so would rely on far too many favourable assumptions for the exercise's results to be meaningful.

5.4 The Anglo-Saxon defences at *Brycg*, Stafford and Tamworth

In order to throw light on how far pre-existing military arrangements may have influenced Staffordshire's original extent, the date and nature of the area's earliest defensive circuits needs to be established. Not all of the places in the West Midlands that had been provided with defences by the early tenth century were necessarily fortified in the middle Anglo-Saxon period, with some perhaps being given defences for the first time by Æthelflæd, as part of her campaign to re-establish 'English'

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[60] Grierson, *English Linear Measurements*, pp. 20-21; also: J.H. Round, 'Introduction to the Northamptonshire Domesday', in W.R.D. Adkins & M. Serjeantson (eds), *The Victoria History of the County of Northampton Volume I* (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1902), p. 281. For an alternative perspective on the origins of England's linear measurements: P. Kidson, 'A Metrological Investigation', *Journal of the Warburg and Caourtald Institutes*, 53 (1990), pp. 71-97. A recent study of Anglo-Saxon timber building measurements provides an inconclusive picture in terms of the degree of pre-Conquest standardisation of units of measurement throughout England (and the study does not contain sufficient chronological specificity for a clear impression to emerge of whether such units were becoming more or less 'standardised' over time): P.J. Huggins, 'Anglo-Saxon Timber Building Measurements: Recent Results', *Medieval Archaeology*, 35 (1991), pp. 6-28.

control in areas that had fallen under Scandinavian rule. Such places could have been provided with only short-lived territories from which to draw their manpower, which may have interfered significantly with any pre-existing arrangements.[61]

This possibility raises important questions: if, for example, Tamworth was provided with defences in the middle Anglo-Saxon period but *Brycg* and Stafford were not fortified until the start of the tenth century, what relationship is likely to have existed between military territories created for *Brycg* and Stafford, and that belonging to Tamworth? What spatial relationship would exist between these territories and the area that came to be known as Staffordshire? What would have been the spatial relationship between pre-existing military structures and the future shire have had all three places acquired defences in the middle Anglo-Saxon period? Unfortunately, as the following synthesis of work on the Anglo-Saxon defences at *Brycg*, Stafford and Tamworth shows, our ability to speculate productively on these issues are hampered by the fact that published excavations have failed to establish the location of the Anglo-Saxon defences at *Brycg* and Stafford, let alone whether Æthelflæd was the first to build defences there.

5.4.1 *Brycg*

The location of the defences built at *Brycg* has not been established. The first reference to fortifications at *Brycg* is probably in 895, when the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that a Scandinavian army over-wintered at *Cwatbrycge* and built defences there.[62] The precise location of these defences is not known, and nor do we

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[61] Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', pp. 83-84, n. 78.

[62] The army is said to have '*þæt geweorc worhton*' ('built that fortress'): ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D', 895; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, pp. 69-70; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 205. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 59; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 44; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, pp. 33-34. For further discussion of the movements of Scandinavian armies throughout the Midlands: Chapter 6.2.

know for how long they remained serviceable (i.e. whether they remained in use after the Scandinavian army in question had moved on). The location of the fortifications which the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records Æthelflæd at *Brycg* in 912[63] is similarly at present unknown, although two statements made by John (formerly known as 'Florence') of Worcester in his chronicle, composed in the early twelfth century, imply that they were built at the site of the present Bridgnorth castle. Worcester records that having built defences at *Scergeat*, Æthelflæd then built more '*in occidentali plaga Sabrine fluminis, in loco qui Brycge dicitur* ('on the west bank of the river Severn, in a place called [*Brycge*]').[64] Worcester also says that in 1101-02 another castle was built at *Brycg*, this time by Robert de Bellême, part of the powerful Montgomery family and Earl of Shropshire until his forfeiture of the earldom in 1102. In Worcester's words, Robert

> '*arcem quam in occidentali Sabrine fluminis plaga, in loco qui Brycge dicitur lingua Saxonica, Agelfleda Merciorum domina quondam construxerat, fratre suo Eduuardo seniore regnante, Scrobbesbyriensis comes Robertus de Beleasmo . . . muro lato et alto, summoque restaurare cepit*' ('began to strengthen with a high and thick wall the fort on the western bank of the Severn, at the place called in the Saxon tongue *Brycge*. This had been built by the lady of the Mercians, Ægelfleda [sic], when her brother Edward the Elder was king').[65]

There can be little doubt that Robert's castle was built at the site of the present Bridgnorth castle,[66] and in light of Worcester's comments, it has therefore sometimes

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[63] ASC, MSS. 'B' & 'C', 912; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 49; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C.*, p. 75; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 211.
[64] R.R. Darlington & P. McGurk (eds), *The Chronicle of John of Worcester: Volume II: the Annals from 450 to 1066* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 366-67. The traditional attribution of John's chronicle, usually thought to have originally been compiled at Worcester in the first half of the twelfth century, to a monk named Florence has been shown to be incorrect. For further discussion: *ibid.*, pp. xvii-xx.
[65] P. McGurk (ed.), *The Chronicle of John of Worcester: Volume III: the Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 98-101.
[66] D.F. Renn, *Norman Castles in Britain* (London: John Baker, 2nd edn, 1973), p. 116.

been argued that Robert re-used the defences built by Æthelflæd.[67] Yet despite Worcester implying that Robert refortified Æthelflæd's defences, there are reasons for believing that her defences were not located at Bridgnorth castle, but were instead built at Quatford, likewise situated on the River Severn, around two miles downstream of modern Bridgnorth.[68] The location of Quatford is shown on Map 14 in Chapter 4.

Jane Croom notes that Worcester was writing in the early twelfth century, and the version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle from which he appears to have derived much of his information is lost.[69] Consequently, she argues, we do not know the extent to which he interpolated information into the text, as no other surviving version of the Chronicle gives such precise information about where Æthelflæd built her defences at Bridgnorth. Croom says that 'there is no reason *per se* to disbelieve [Worcester's] statement [regarding the location of the fortifications built by Æthelflæd], although he may have been recording a later tradition rather than a fuller version of the Chronicle. However, the entry referring to the refortification of the *burh* by Robert . . . may be less reliable, and it is unlikely that [Worcester's] source for this was a copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'.[70] She notes that Orderic Vitalis, who also recorded the construction of a 'castle' at Bridge (*Brugia*) by Robert, made

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[67] For example: J.F.A. Mason & P.A. Barker, 'The Norman Castle at Quatford', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 57 (1961-64), pp. 37-38; T.R. Slater, *Medieval Composite Towns in England: Evidence from Bridgnorth, Shropshire* (School of Geography, University of Birmingham Working Paper Series, 41, 1988), pp. 4 & 7; *idem*, 'English Medieval New Towns with Composite Plans: Evidence from the Midlands', in *idem* (ed.), *The Built Form of Western Cities: Essays for M.R.G. Conzen on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), p. 66.

[68] J.N. Croom, 'The Topographical Analysis of Medieval Town Plans: the Examples of Much Wenlock and Bridgnorth', *Midland History*, 17 (1992), pp. 19-20 & n. 10. For a more detailed analysis of the situation: *eadem*, 'The Pre-Medieval and Medieval Human Landscape and Settlement Pattern of South-East Shropshire', (unpublished University of Birmingham PhD thesis, 1989) pp. 297-305.

[69] For discussion of John's sources: Darlington & McGurk (eds), *John of Worcester II*, pp. xix-xx.

[70] Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', p. 300.

no mention of Æthelflæd's defences being on the same site,[71] and argues that there is in fact no firm evidence that locates Æthelflæd's defences unequivocally at the modern settlement of Bridgnorth. She proposes instead that the Æthelflædan fortifications at *Brycg* were built at Quatford.

Croom points out that Quatford appears only once in Domesday Book, under the entry for the Shropshire manor of Eardington, where we hear that there was a new house and a *burgus* (i.e. 'borough') named Quatford, which yielded nothing in 1086.[72] Eardington and Quatford lie on opposite sides of the Severn, Eardington on the west bank and Quatford on the east, but an administrative link between the two places was still visible in the area's nineteenth-century parochial arrangements, when Eardington was considered to be part of Quatford parish. Furthermore, at this time Quatford was the only township in the area whose boundaries extended beyond its own side of the Severn, incorporating a small amount of land on the opposite bank, a situation which may be significant in light of the facts that, firstly, it might be expected that the river would here form the boundary for all parishes and manors (as it does through Shropshire to the south of Quatford and to the north of Bridgnorth), and, secondly, it is very likely that Æthelflæd's defences at *Brycg* took the form of a fortified bridge (see below).[73] Croom thus argues that Worcester may have confused a tradition that Æthelflæd's defences were situated on the western side of the river with the later construction of the present Bridgnorth castle on this bank.[74]

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[71] M. Chibnall (ed.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis Volume V: Books IX and X* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 224-25.
[72] DB, f. 254; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Shropshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 4,1,32); Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', p. 301.
[73] *Ibid.*; SA PF225/2/1, Tithe Map for Quatford (1846).
[74] Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', p. 300. Croom here also notes her view that 'it must also be borne in mind that the assumption that Robert's castle lay at Bridgnorth, under the present castle, may be incorrect'.

Croom thinks it extremely likely that Æthelflæd was fortifying a bridge when she built defences at *Brycg* in 912. The existence of a bridge over the river here is implied by the place-name element *brycge* ('bridge'), a fact which, she argues, is made explicit by a reference in Æthelweard's Chronicle to a 'Viking army' making use of a bridge at *Cwatbrycge* in 910 prior to the Battle of Wednesfield.[75] Indeed, the Severn is not easily traversable in this part of Shropshire, and so such a crossing-point is likely, in the words of Croom, to have been 'of major strategic and economic importance'. She therefore thinks it likely that Æthelflæd may have been prompted to build a so-called 'double *burh*' at *Brycg*, whereby she built fortifications on each bank of the river, thus controlling both the river and its crossing. This situation would not be unique to *Brycg*: the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, for instance, records that Edward the Elder '*geworhte þa byrig buta on ægðer healfde eas*' at Buckingham (i.e. built defences 'on each side of the river'),[76] and Charles the Bald fortified bridges in West Francia in the mid to late ninth century in a similar way.[77] But whatever the location of *Brycg's* early tenth-century fortifications, the most important point in the context of this study is that without knowing whether these were the first to be built there, we can say very little about the potential antiquity of any military hinterland attached to them, and therefore how in practice the defences built at *Brycg* might have influenced territorial arrangements in the Staffordshire area.

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[75] *Ibid.*, p. 297; Æthelweard records that the Mercians and West Saxons moved against the 'barbarians' while they were 'rejoicing in rich spoil . . . crossing to the east side of the river Severn, over a *pons* to give the Latin spelling, which is called [*Cwatbridge*] by the common people' ('*ast ubi parte retraxere domi ouantes spoliis optimis parte in eoa fluuii Sefern etiam transmeabant pontem ordine litterato qui uulgo CuatBrycge nuncupatur*'): A. Campbell (ed.) *Chronicon Æthelweardi: The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), p. 53.

[76] ASC, MSS. 'A', 'B', 'C', & 'D', 914; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 66; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative MS. B*, p. 49; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.) *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 74; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 213. For Croom's arguments: Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', pp. 297-303.

[77] Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', p. 58, n. 17. For further discussion: S. Coupland, 'The Vikings in Francia and Anglo-Saxon England to 911', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History Volume II:* c. *700* – c. *900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 198; C. Gillmor, 'The Logistics of Fortified Bridge Building on the Seine Under Charles the Bald', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 11 (1988), pp. 89-91, 99-106.

5.4.2 Tamworth

Much more can be said about the likely course of Tamworth's late Anglo-Saxon defences, where the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that fortifications were built in 913 (although we have already seen that there was very probably a pre-Æthelflædan defensive circuit at Tamworth not mentioned in contemporary written sources).[78] It is generally thought that the borough's late medieval defences effectively followed the course of their Æthelflædan predecessors, and so the line of the late medieval defences provides a useful starting point for any investigation into that of the Anglo-Saxon ones.

A number of excavation reports relating to the following places in Tamworth (have been published: Brewery Lane (1967) [A], Lichfield Street (1968) [B], Bell Inn Corner (1972) [C], Albert Road (1960) [D], Albert Road (1971) [E], Marmion Street (1964) [F], Marmion Street (1977) [G], Bolebridge Street (1968) [H] and Bolebridge Street (1971) [I]. The letters in square brackets relate to the locations illustrated on Map 17. It should, however, be said at the outset that many of the reports are abbreviated to such an extent that clearly distinguishing the security of the dating evidence for the material excavated (and sometimes, indeed, what was found at all), is sometimes difficult, with the reports' brevity mostly attributable to the difficult circumstances affecting many of the excavations in question.[79]

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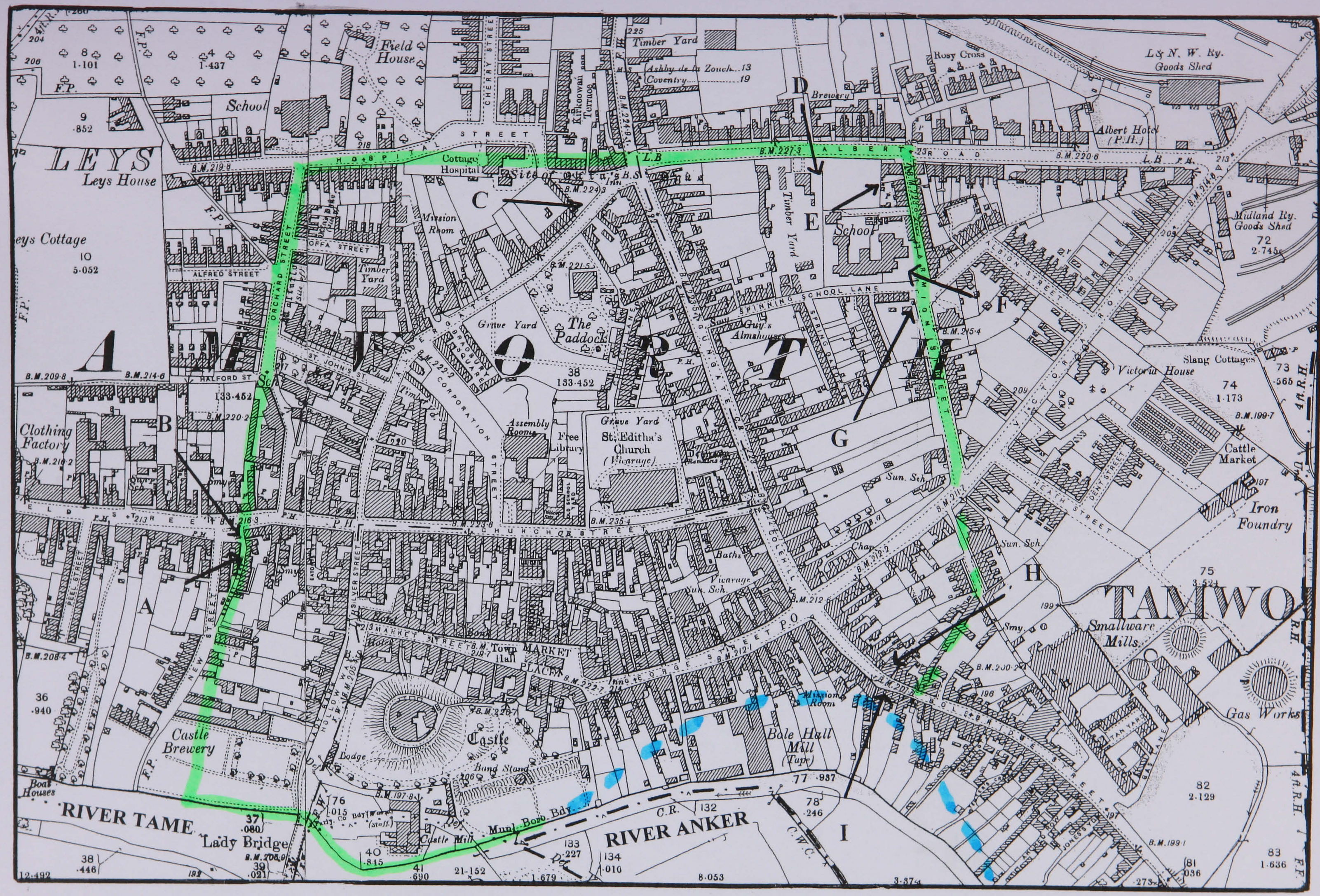
[78] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C'; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; O'Brien O'Keeffe, *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 75; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212.

[79] For example: Jim Gould's 1967 excavation at Brewery Lane [A] was completed in just three weeks prior to the redevelopment of that site as flats. Circumstances were similar in his 1968 excavation at Lichfield Street [B], with work taking place between 27 July and 20 August 1968: J. Gould, 'First Report of the Excavations at Tamworth, Staffs., 1967 – The Saxon Defences', *Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society* [hereafter *TSSAHS*], 9 (1967-68), p. 17; *idem.*, 'Third Report of the Excavations at Tamworth, Staffs., 1968 – The Western Entrance to the Saxon Borough', *TSSAHS*, 10 (1968-69), p. 32. Dr F.T. Wainwright sadly died before his excavations at Albert Road of 1960 [D] were written up, the task eventually being completed by Ken Sheridan: K. Sheridan, 'Seventh Report of Excavations at Tamworth, Staffs. – A Section Through the Northern Defences Excavated by Dr. F.T. Wainwright in 1960', *TSSAHS*, 14 (1972-73), p. 38.



Map 17: The course of the late medieval defences at Tamworth. Key on next page

Base map: A. Godfrey, *Old Ordnance Survey Maps: Tamworth 1900* (Gateshead, 1989)

Key to Map 17

Scale

0 miles 0.25 miles

Location of excavation site: **A**

Late medieval defences:

Suggested course of River Anker in the late Anglo-Saxon period:

Courses of defences and river after P. Rahtz & R. Meeson, *An Anglo-Saxon Watermill at Tamworth: Excavations in the Bolebridge Street Area of Tamworth, Staffordshire, in 1971 and 1978* (Council for British Archaeology: Research Report 83, 1992), p. 4

The southern limits of the Æthelflædan and late medieval fortified area is thought to have been marked by the River Anker, although the tenth-century and modern courses of the river probably differed. Excavations in 1971 revealed the existence of a water mill of two phases immediately to the south-west of modern Bolebridge Street [I]. Both phases dated from before A.D. 1000.[80] Since the mill was doubtless powered by the River Anker it is reasonable to conclude that in the late Anglo-Saxon period the river ran much closer to the modern George Street and Bolebridge Street than it currently does (perhaps to within a few yards of them), meaning also that the northward loop which the river makes in the vicinity of the two streets was probably once more pronounced than it is today.

Moving clockwise around the defensive circuit, the river is thought to have formed the limits of the defended area for some distance west of George Street and Bolebridge Street. Around 300 yards west of the confluence between the Rivers Anker and Tame, the course of the late medieval defences seems to have turned sharply northwards, running through what in the early twentieth century was the site of the Castle Brewery, then along Brewery Lane [A], crossing Lichfield Street [B], and afterwards picking up the line of Orchard Street. From here it is thought that the line of the defences turned eastwards, moving first along Hospital Street and then picking up Albert Road at Bell Inn Corner [C] (at the 'crossroads' of Gungate and Upper Gungate). The defences apparently continued east [D and E] until the junction between Marmion Street and Albert Road, whereupon they turned south, running back towards the Anker along Marmion Street [F and G]. It is in the south-eastern corner of the defensive circuit that the course of both the Æthelflædan and late medieval defences becomes more difficult to discern: they perhaps continued south

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[80] P. Rahtz in P. Rahtz & R. Meeson, *An Anglo-Saxon Watermill at Tamworth: Excavations in the Bolebridge Street Area of Tamworth, Staffordshire, in 1971 and 1978* (Council for British Archaeology: Research Report 83, 1992), pp. 9 & 14.

from the point where Marmion Street joins Victoria Road, but in any case soon appear to have turned sharply west to rejoin the river.[81] It is not clear whether scholars believe that the river side of the fortified area was defended by a man-made defensive structure, such as a wall or rampart, or whether the fortifications here consisted only of the 'natural barrier' formed by the Rivers Anker and Tame (although we have already seen that there are reasons for believing that in the late Anglo-Saxon period a man-made rampart would probably have been needed).[82]

Our knowledge of the course of the late medieval defences at Tamworth is based on both archaeological and non-archaeological sources, although evidence for the course of the Anglo-Saxon circuit comes from archaeology alone. West of the western Albert Road site [E], excavated in 1971, the line of what is presumably the medieval rampart was still visible at the time of the excavation as an irregularity in the surface of the ground between modern houses. The line of a ditch called the 'King's Ditch' was likewise still visible in the nineteenth century and can be discerned on several contemporary maps running across the northern edge of the 1971 site [E]. Furthermore, in the seventeenth century Dr Robert Plot also mentioned a 'mount' in the angle of the defences at the junction between Albert Road and Marmion Street, i.e. at the proposed north-eastern corner of the defended area.[83]

Sections of Tamworth's Anglo-Saxon defences have only been excavated for certain at Brewery Lane [A] and Lichfield Street [B], although given that both of these sites were on the line of the late medieval defences, and, as we shall see, circumstantial arguments can be made for the discovery of the defences built in 913 at

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[81] P. Rahtz, 'The Archaeology of West Mercian Towns', in A. Dornier (ed.), *Mercian Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 120; *idem*, *An Anglo-Saxon Watermill*, p. 4.
[82] Above: pp. 147-48. Philip Rahtz, however, has commented that 'perhaps no defence was needed' on this side of the circuit: *idem*, 'The Archaeology', p. 116.
[83] K.W. Sheridan, 'Sixth Report of Excavations at Tamworth, Staffs. (1971). A Section of the Saxon and Medieval Defences, Albert Road', *TSSAHS*, 14 (1972-73), pp. 32-33.

other places on that line (for example at Albert Road [E]), we can be fairly certain that the course of the Ætheflædan and late medieval defensive circuits was effectively the same.[84] Jim Gould uncovered strong evidence of the Æthelflædan defences at Brewery Lane in 1967 [A]. This consisted of a ditch, six feet deep and about 12 feet wide at the top, and a berm some 20 feet wide, which separated the ditch from turf-built rampart with a frontal timber revetment and internal wooden strapping.[85] Other than three pottery sherds recovered 'from the base of the Saxon rampart' and dated by him to 'anytime within that period', little direct dating evidence was uncovered at the site by Gould, but his late Anglo-Saxon ditch was scarped by the one dating from the late Middle Ages, and so must have preceded it.[86]

Gould found similar earthwork defences, although little direct dating evidence, in his 1968 excavation at Lichfield Street [B].[87] But in view of their general similarity to those excavated at places in Wessex which are listed in the Burghal Hidage, they, and their counterparts at Brewery Lane, very probably belong to the early tenth century.[88] Circumstantial evidence likewise indicated that Ken Sheridan's 1971 excavations at Albert Road [E] may have uncovered a section of the Æthelflædan defences. Sheridan found a V-shaped ditch, 2.5 metres wide and 1.2 metres deep and a rampart 5.2 m. wide, which was separated from the rampart by a 6.4 metre berm. No dating evidence was obtained from either the ditch or the rampart, but the former pre-

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[84] The only place where this is not true is in the aforementioned south-east corner of the circuit, near the junction between Marmion Street and Victoria Road. This is because, in the words of Rahtz, 'the sequence of development of [this] part of the borough boundary is apparently more complex than the rest of the circuit': Rahtz & Meeson, *An Anglo-Saxon Watermill*, p. 5.

[85] Gould, 'First Report', pp. 18-20. This has important features in common with the Anglo-Saxon defences at Hereford, 'both in their late ninth-/early tenth-century form and after their refurbishment with masonry up to a century later': Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', pp. 68-69.

[86] Gould, 'First Report', pp. 22 & 26.

[87] Gould, 'Third Report', pp. 35-37. Steven Bassett, however, has argued that 'many of the smaller features interpreted as post-holes may have been naturally formed, such as by tree roots': Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', p. 69, n. 42.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 74, n. 55.

dated a very large ditch to the north which, Sheridan said, 'can only have been the medieval ditch', suggesting that the former one was of pre-Conquest date.[89]

Steven Bassett has argued that there was an earlier line of defences beneath the late Anglo-Saxon ones at Tamworth.[90] Due to the aforementioned difficult circumstances of many of Tamworth's excavations and the abbreviated nature of its published reports, it is often impossible to make a firm identification of every feature and layer uncovered which may be pre-Æthelflædan – although fortunately some of the pre-Æthelflædan features can still be securely recognised by their position in the stratigraphical sequence.[91] The first phase defences at Tamworth were uncovered at the Brewery Lane and Lichfield Street sites [A and B], although Gould was unable to examine these earliest features fully. Having reviewed both the published and unpublished material relating to these sites, however, Bassett notes that one feature,[92] sealed below the Æthelflædan rampart, looks like 'a trench which had held a line of vertical posts revetting the front of the rampart', the profile of which implied that it had been 'dug to hold posts and then rapidly backfilled as soon as they had been inserted, and from which the posts had subsequently been removed'.[93]

Such a feature would certainly imply that, as was apparently the case at Hereford and Winchcombe, there was a substantial earthwork defence at Tamworth, and one which significantly pre-dated the fortifications in place there by 913; the position of these earlier defences – underneath their Æthelflædan successors – would likewise imply that they followed the same course as both Æthelflæd's defences and

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[89] Sheridan, 'Seventh Report', p. 35.
[90] Their existence has likewise been posited by Jeremy Haslam: J. Haslam, 'Market and Fortress in the Reign of Offa', *World Archaeology*, 19 (1987), pp. 76-93, with discussion of Tamworth at pp. 80, 83-84 & 90.
[91] Others, however, can only be said to be likelier than not pre-Æthelflædan: Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', p. 69. For further discussion of the difficult circumstances of excavation: above, p. 159, n. 79.
[92] Feature X in Gould, 'First Report', p. 19 (fig. 2).
[93] Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', p. 71.

those belonging to the late medieval borough. It should, however, be noted that there is no direct dating evidence for the first phase defences at Tamworth (and the same is true of Hereford and Winchcombe): Bassett says instead that 'in each case the rampart and associated features were securely located in the stratigraphical sequence below archaeological layers and features which comprised a distinct later defensive work which can reliably be dated to the period in which Æthelred and Æthelflæd, and then the latter alone, are said to have built defences in western Mercia'. But, it has been seem, he felt it unlikely the first phase defences post-dated the early ninth century, as otherwise 'insufficient time would have been available, between their construction and those built by Æthelflæd, to allow sub-aerial weathering and deterioration to occur on the scale recorded'.[94] It therefore seems very likely that at least one place in the Staffordshire area had pre-tenth-century defences on a significant scale, and was perhaps, we have seen, responsible for the defence of a dependent territory.

5.4.3 Stafford

Unfortunately excavation has yet to establish the course and date of Stafford's first-phase defences. Consequently, there is no way of knowing whether the defences which are said by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to have been built at Stafford by Æthelflæd in 913 were the first to be have been built there, or whether, as at Tamworth, she added to pre-existing, and unrecorded, defensive arrangements.[95] Yet some suggestions for the line of the late Anglo-Saxon defences at Stafford have been made, taking the town's modern-day street plan as their basis, and which are illustrated on Map 18. Martin Carver, for example, has proposed that the defensive circuit was based on a very small area around the current site of St Mary's church,

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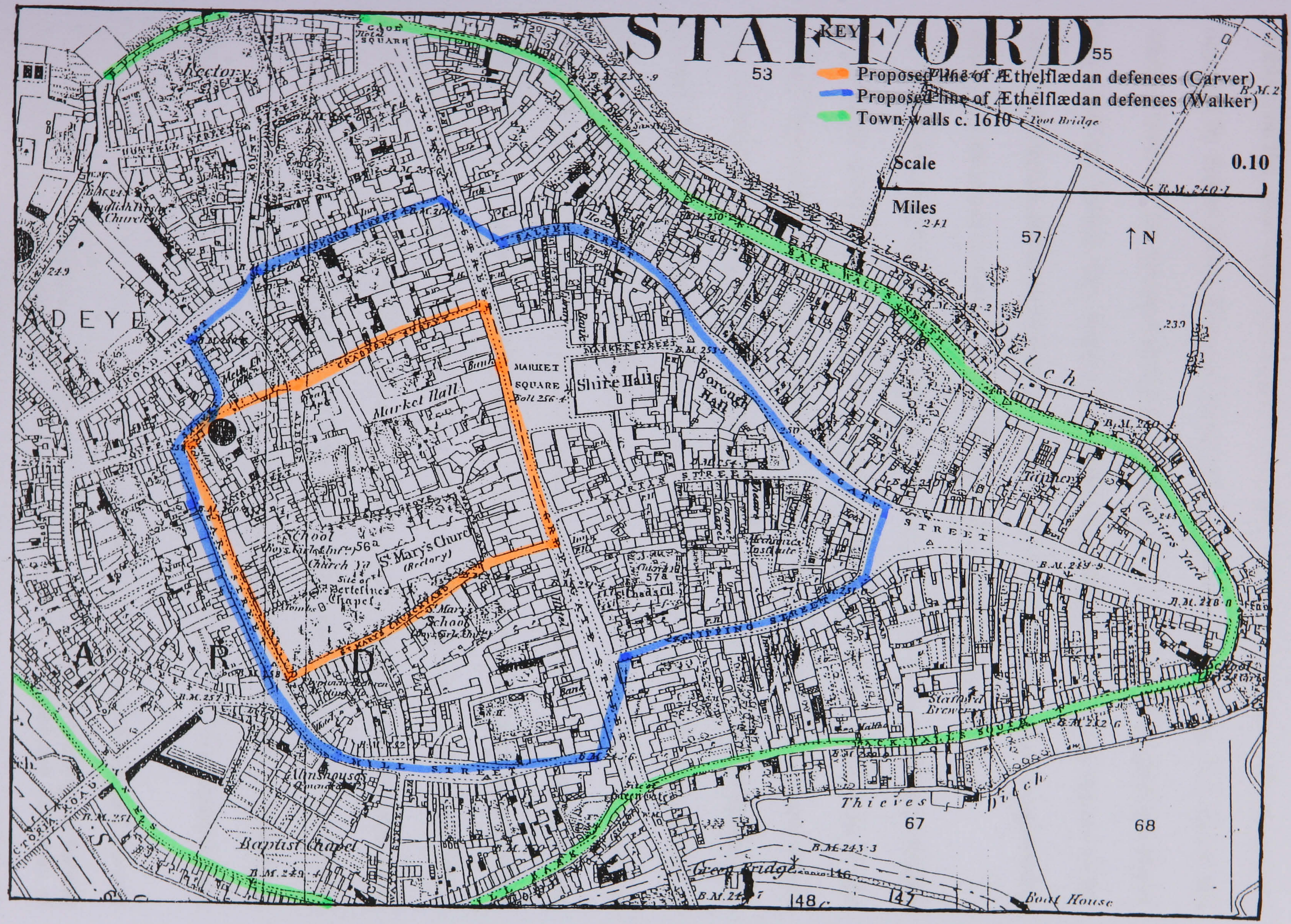
[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 74-77.
[95] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 913; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; O'Brien O'Keeffe, *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 75; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212.


STAFFORD
KEY
Proposed line of Æthelflædan defences (Carver)
Proposed line of Æthelflædan defences (Walker)
Town walls c. 1610
Scale
0.10
Miles
.241
N
Rectory
Market Hall
Shire Hall
Borough Hall
Market Square
Market Street
Gaol Square
Foot Bridge
Tannery
Tenters
Stamford Brewery
Baptist Chapel
Almshouses
Thieves Ditch
Green Bridge
Boat House
Stafford Street
Salter Street
Back Lane
Mill Street
Gaolford Street
Eastgate Street
Stepping Street
Broad Street
Crabmill Street
Foregate Street
St. Mary's Church
St. Mary's School
Site of Bertelines Chapel
Church Yd
Bank
Malthg
Workhouse
Green Gate
Chapel
Tank
Pump
Sch
Ch
Yard
Gdns
Ho
Inst
Brewery
Malthg
Bldgs
Cott
Cottages
Terrace
Row
Alley
Passage
Court
Square
Road
Street
Lane
Hill
Bridge
Gate
Yard
Gardens
Place
Walk
Drive
Avenue
Crescent
Close
Grove
Park
Field
Fields
Meadow
Meadows
Orchard
Garden
Gardens
Wharf
Quay
Dock
Basin
Canal
Lock
Weir
Mill
Factory
Works
Foundry
Forge
Smithy
Shop
Shops
Inn
Hotel
Tavern
Public House
Club
Hall
Institute
Library
Museum
Theatre
Cinema
Church
Chapel
Meeting House
Vicarage
Rectory
Manse
Presbytery
Convent
Monastery
Abbey
Priory
Cathedral
Minster
Castle
Fort
Barracks
Prison
Gaol
Police Station
Fire Station
Post Office
Telephone
Telegraph
Railway
Station
Goods
Yard
Sidings
Tunnel
Viaduct
Embankment
Cutting
Level Crossing
Signal Box
Turntable
Engine Shed
Water Tower
Gasworks
Electricity
Substation
Transformer
Pylon
Overhead Line
Underground
Cable
Pipeline
Sewage
Works
Treatment
Plant
Refuse
Tip
Quarry
Pit
Mine
Shaft
Adit
Level
Spoil
Heap
Tip
Slag
Heap
Waste
Ground
Derelict
Land
Reclaimed
Land
Made
Ground
Filled
In
Infilled
Backfilled
Levelled
Graded
Terraced
Banked
Retaining
Wall
Revetment
Sea
Wall
Groyne
Breakwater
Jetty
Pier
Landing
Stage
Slipway
Boathouse
Lifeboat
Station
Coastguard
Station
Lighthouse
Beacon
Buoy
Mooring
Anchorage
Harbour
Master
Customs
House
Warehouse
Bonded
Store
Cold
Store
Abattoir
Slaughterhouse
Market
Cross
Fountain
Pump
Well
Spring
Boundary
Stone
Milestone
Signpost
Guidepost
Direction
Finger
Post
Telephone
Box
Pillar
Box
Letter
Box
Post
Box
Wall
Box
Fire
Alarm
Box
Police
Box
Public
Telephone
Kiosk
Bus
Stop
Shelter
Seat
Bench
Litter
Bin
Dustbin
Recycling
Point
Bottle
Bank
Clothes
Bank
Car
Park
Multi-storey
Car
Park
Underground
Car
Park
Coach
Park
Lorry
Park
Caravan
Site
Camping
Site
Youth
Hostel
Picnic
Site
Viewpoint
Lookout
Point
Nature
Reserve
Wildlife
Trust
Reserve
Country
Park
Forest
Park
Golf
Course
Golf
Links
Golf
Clubhouse
Golf
Driving
Range
Golf
Practice
Ground
Golf
Tee
Golf
Green
Golf
Fairway
Golf
Bunker
Golf
Hazard
Golf
Rough
Golf
Out
of
Bounds
Golf
Boundary
Golf
Course
Boundary
Golf
Course
Path
Golf
Course
Road
Golf
Course
Bridge
Golf
Course
Tunnel
Golf
Course
Underpass
Golf
Course
Overpass
Golf
Course
Footbridge
Golf
Course
Stile
Golf
Course
Gate
Golf
Course
Fence
Golf
Course
Hedge
Golf
Course
Wall
Golf
Course
Ditch
Golf
Course
Stream
Golf
Course
Pond
Golf
Course
Lake
Golf
Course
Reservoir
Golf
Course
Water
Tank
Golf
Course
Water
Tower
Golf
Course
Windmill
Golf
Course
Watermill
Golf
Course
Lighthouse
Golf
Course
Beacon
Golf
Course
Buoy
Golf
Course
Mooring
Golf
Course
Anchorage
Golf
Course
Harbour
Golf
Course
Master
Golf
Course
Customs
House
Golf
Course
Warehouse
Golf
Course
Bonded
Store
Golf
Course
Cold
Store
Golf
Course
Abattoir
Golf
Course
Slaughterhouse
Golf
Course
Market
Golf
Course
Cross
Golf
Course
Fountain
Golf
Course
Pump
Golf
Course
Well
Golf
Course
Spring
Golf
Course
Boundary
Golf
Course
Stone
Golf
Course
Milestone
Golf
Course
Signpost
Golf
Course
Guidepost
Golf
Course
Direction
Golf
Course
Finger
Post
Golf
Course
Telephone
Box
Golf
Course
Pillar
Box
Golf
Course
Letter
Box
Golf
Course
Post
Box
Golf
Course
Wall
Box
Golf
Course
Fire
Alarm
Box
Golf
Course
Police
Box
Golf
Course
Public
Telephone
Kiosk
Golf
Course
Bus
Stop
Golf
Course
Shelter
Golf
Course
Seat
Golf
Course
Bench
Golf
Course
Litter
Bin
Golf
Course
Dustbin
Golf
Course
Recycling
Point
Golf
Course
Bottle
Bank
Golf
Course
Clothes
Bank
Golf
Course
Car
Park
Golf
Course
Multi-storey
Car
Park
Golf
Course
Underground
Car
Park
Golf
Course
Coach
Park
Golf
Course
Lorry
Park
Golf
Course
Caravan
Site
Golf
Course
Camping
Site
Golf
Course
Youth
Hostel
Golf
Course
Picnic
Site
Golf
Course
Viewpoint
Golf
Course
Lookout
Point
Golf
Course
Nature
Reserve
Golf
Course
Wildlife
Trust
Reserve
Golf
Course
Country
Park
Golf
Course
Forest
Park
Golf
Course
Golf
Course
Golf
Course

extending as far north as Craberry Street and with an eastern boundary that followed the line of the main north-south road that runs through the centre of Stafford.[96] Alison Walker, on the other hand, has suggested that the defences may have enclosed an area bounded by Salter Street, Eastgate Street, Tipping Street, Mill Street, Earl Street and Stafford Street.[97] Yet the enclosed area resulting from both of these suggestions seems very small (or, rather, they appear small when compared to the known courses of the late Anglo-Saxon defences elsewhere in the West Midlands), and neither suggestion is better than the other in the absence of any reliable archaeological evidence.

Recent excavations at Broadeye, however, have uncovered a series of ditches of probable Anglo-Saxon or Norman origin. Broadeye is in the north-west of the 'island'-type peninsula, which formed the core of late medieval Stafford and which was surrounded by marshland on three sides and on the other side by the River Sow. It seems unlikely, however, that these ditches were part of the Æthelflædan defensive circuit, or any earlier one, as their curvature implies that they were built in relation to some activity on the 'island', but still further to the north-west.[98] By analogy with other late Anglo-Saxon defensive circuits, such as Tamworth, it is inconceivable that the defended area at Stafford would have been confined to such a tiny area. Thus, although it is possible that the line of the Anglo-Saxon fortifications took this route for some reason unknown to us, it is much more likely that the ditches were part of the defences of a castle that was built at Stafford, almost certainly at Broadeye, following the rebellions against the Crown of 1069-70.[99] But in the final analysis, the

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[96] C.B.K. Cane, J. Cane & M.O.H. Carver, 'Saxon and Medieval Stafford: New Results and Theories 1983', *West Midlands Archaeology*, 26 (1983), p. 51

[97] A.J. Walker, 'The Archaeology of Stafford to 1600 AD: A Survey of the Archaeology of Stafford with a Discussion of the Implications of Development in the Town' (unpublished University of Bradford MA thesis, 1976), p. 19

[98] R. Cuttler (ed.), *Stafford College, Broadeye, Stafford: Post-Excavation Assessment and Research Design* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Institute for Archaeology & Antiquity, 2004), p. 6

[99] In spite of the independent evidence of a castle being located at Broadeye, until the ditches can be more accurately dated it remains possible that they were unrelated either to it or to the Anglo-Saxon

only thing that can be said with certainty regarding Stafford's Anglo-Saxon defensive circuit, is that it could not have extended beyond the edge of the 'island' into marshland and river beyond.[100]

It is a great pity that more is not known about the course and date of the first-phase defences at Stafford as this limits what can be usefully said about the likely relationship between any military hinterland belonging to it and one belonging to Tamworth. For example, if Æthelflæd was responsible for Stafford's earliest Anglo-Saxon defences, might this mean that prior to the tenth century Stafford would have formed part of the military hinterland of a nearby fortified place, such as Tamworth? Or was Stafford, like Tamworth, provided with defences in the middle Anglo-Saxon period? If so, then considering the locations of both places within the late eleventh-century shire, would any administrative district attached to it have been congruent with that of its south-eastern neighbour? Stafford had important administrative and ecclesiastical roles by the late Anglo-Saxon period: by 1086 it was a royal borough and the site of an important collegiate church.[101] Yet this does not mean that it must have been fortified prior to 913.

We find a similar story at Warwick, another shire town in fairly close proximity to Tamworth, and likewise said to have been provided with defences by

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defences. For the location of the castle: M.J. Edwards, 'The Anglo-Saxon Origins of Stafford and its Churches' (unpublished University of Birmingham MPhil thesis, 2005), Appendix.

[100] This was the case for the course of the late medieval town walls, which, other than to the east and south-east, hugged the edge of the 'island'. See John Speed's map of Stafford of 1610, reproduced in M.W. Greenslade, D.A. Johnson & C.J. Currie, 'The Borough of Stafford', in M.W. Greenslade & D.A. Johnson (eds), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume VI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 188. For further discussion of Stafford's pre-Norman defences: Edwards, 'Stafford', pp. 28-31.

[101] DB, f. 246; A. Hawkins & A. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976), B1 & B10.

Æthelflæd in the early tenth century (in this case in 914).[102] Like Stafford, the course and date of its Anglo-Saxon defences are yet to be established, with most attempted reconstructions similarly being based on the town's modern-day street plan, and unconfirmed by excavation.[103] But whenever Stafford and Warwick acquired their first-phase defences, considering that the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary dissected Tamworth borough, and almost certainly, therefore the Anglo-Saxon defended area, it is certain that any former military hinterland attached to Tamworth would have been shared between Staffordshire and Warwickshire when shires were created in the West Midlands.[104]

To sum up so far, assessing how, in practical terms, tenth-century and earlier military arrangements may influenced Staffordshire's territorial origins and early history has proved most difficult. The chapter has not, however, uncovered any evidence to suggest that Steven Bassett's model for the origins of the West Midland shires is not viable for the Staffordshire area. Indeed, the possibility that this area had once been part of the military territory or territories belonging to one or more pre-tenth-century fortified places remains a strong one. There are good grounds to believe that such a network of fortified places was spread throughout the Mercian kingdom by that time: Hereford, Tamworth and Winchcombe seem to have been provided with defences by the early ninth century, and the obligation placed on landholders to send men at regular intervals for the maintenance and repair of fortified places implies that

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[102] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C'; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; O'Brien O'Keeffe, *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 75; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212.

[103] Klingelhöfer, 'Evidence'; S.G. Wallsgrove, 'Warwick: An Analysis of the Layout of the Anglo-Saxon Burh', *Warwickshire History*, 12. 4 (2003-04), pp. 147-53.

[104] As argued by Steven Bassett, who suggests that some of this territory may have been incorporated within Derbyshire and Leicestershire too: Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape' pp. 155-56. Terry Slater has suggested that the north and east part of the area which came to be known as Warwickshire may have been administered from Tamworth in the tenth century, with the shire perhaps being created in the early eleventh century: T.R. Slater, 'The Origins of Warwick', *Midland History*, 8 (1983), p. 3.

such places existed at which the work was to be done.[105] It is also reasonable to think that individual manors would have known to which fortified place their men should be sent, and that such arrangements formed the basis of territories attached to the region's fortified places (although since no pre-tenth-century charters survive for Staffordshire we have no explicit evidence of this obligation being enforced in that area in the eighth or ninth century).

Unfortunately, however, it is not currently possible to assess how, in practice, such a network of military territories would have impinged on the area that came to be known as Staffordshire. In order to speculate more productively on this matter we need, as a minimum, to know the relative dates of the first-phase defences at *Brycg*, Stafford and Tamworth: that is to say, we need to have a better idea of whether, like Tamworth, *Brycg* and Stafford were first provided with defences in the middle Anglo-Saxon period, or if they were not fortified until the time of Æthelflæd. Nevertheless, some things can still be said reliably about the likely impact on Staffordshire's territorial origins of the decision that Tamworth would not become a shire town. Tamworth is a little over 20 miles south-east of Stafford, and so had it also become a shire town, any shire territory focused on Stafford would not have been of the same shape as Staffordshire. It has been seen that the boundary between Staffordshire and Warwickshire bisected the late nineteenth-century borough at Tamworth, and probably also bisected the Anglo-Saxon fortified area (as can be seen on Maps 12 (Chapter 3) and 17).[106] Thus, if both Stafford and Tamworth had been focus of shire territories, the south-eastern boundary of Stafford's shire would certainly not have cut through Tamworth, or followed a course very close to it – at least if both places were to be provided with coherent territories. Alternatively, it is possible that if Tamworth

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[105] Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', p. 81; above, p. 140.
[106] The probable reasons for course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary through Tamworth are discussed in the Conclusion.

had been given a shire Stafford would not have become a shire town at all. Changes to any pre-existing military territories therefore must have occurred in the Tamworth area when the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary was laid down, and Staffordshire's original geographical extent was undoubtedly influenced by the apparent downgrading of Tamworth's administrative role.[107]

5.5 Territorial arrangements in the East Midlands

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle makes a number of references to early tenth-century territorial arrangements in the East Midlands. Like their West Midland counterparts, we do not know when the East Midland shires came into being, although most of them similarly appear to have existed by the early eleventh century, when they are first mentioned by name in contemporary written sources.[108] Although throwing light on the territorial origins of the East Midland shires is not the main aim of this thesis, it is nevertheless worthwhile to consider whether anything can be said about the relationship between the early tenth-century territories recorded by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and that of the East Midland shires. This is because much of the East Midlands is known to have been under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the eleventh century, and so it is arguably less likely that its shires would reflect earlier territorial arrangements than would those in the West Midlands.[109] Consequently, if there was any evidence that the layout of the East Midland shires reflected that of earlier territorial arrangements, this might provide grounds for thinking that similar

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[107] The reasons for which are further discussed in the conclusion, pp. 342-44.

[108] For a list of the earliest references to individual shires in the West and East Midlands: C.S. Taylor, 'The Origin of the Mercian Shires', in H.P.R. Finberg (ed.), *Gloucestershire Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1957 [originally published 1898]), pp. 23-24.

[109] This statement is based on the view that administrative arrangements are more likely to have been disrupted in areas that fell under Scandinavian rule rather than those which remained under 'English' control. This view, along with what is known about the geographical limits of ninth- and early tenth-century Scandinavian rule in the Midlands, is assessed in Chapter 6.

continuity is likely in the West Midlands too (i.e. in a region for which there is no direct evidence of Scandinavian rule). Nevertheless, it is important to remember that because parts of the East Midlands are known to have been under direct Scandinavian control in the later ninth or early tenth centuries, direct comparisons with the West Midlands may be inappropriate. Indeed, even if striking evidence of continuity in the East Midlands were to be found, this would not prove that the West Midlands enjoyed a similar continuity.

Most of our information concerning early tenth-century territorial arrangements in the East Midlands is derived from Manuscript 'A' of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and largely appears in the context of what it says about Edward the Elder's capture of areas then under Scandinavian political control. There is evidence that a number of places in the East Midlands were provided with defences by that time, and in the case of Nottingham by the mid-ninth century. Nottingham, along with Derby, Leicester, Lincoln and Stamford, was one of the so-called 'Five Boroughs'. They and other places in the East Midlands seem to have acted as bases for Scandinavian armies. For instance, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 867 the Mercians and the West Saxons made an unsuccessful 'siege' of a Scandinavian army sheltering at Nottingham in its *geweorce* ('fortress', 'construction'. 'stronghold').[110] Asser, in his 'Life of King Alfred', likewise records this siege, and says that the Vikings were protected by the defences of the stronghold at Nottingham, and that the 'Christians' were unable to breach its rampart.[111] At Stamford, on the other hand, the

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[110] For the meaning of *geweorce*: J. Bosworth & T.N. Toller (eds), *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882), p. 465-66. For the 'siege': ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D' & 'E', 868. Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 47; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 34; O' Brien O' Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 58; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 24; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 48; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 192.

[111] S. Keynes & M. Lapidge (eds), *Alfred the Great: Asser's "Life of King Alfred and other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 77. Steven Bassett also notes that archaeological evidence hints at the existence of an allegedly middle Anglo-Saxon defended enclosure at Nottingham: Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?' p. 78.

Chronicle says that Edward '*gewyrcan ða burh on suðhealfe ðære*' (built defences 'on the south side of the river') in 918,[112] and the Chronicle likewise refers to a *burh* ('fortified place') at Derby in 917.[113] Being former Roman walled towns, it is likely that Lincoln and Leicester also had defences by the early tenth century, as may have Northampton, which, although not part of the 'Five Boroughs', was said along with Leicester to be the base of a Scandinavian army in 913, which strongly implies the presence of defences at that time.[114]

Some of these places are specifically described by the Chronicle in terms which suggest they had territories attached to them in the early tenth century, although we are rarely given any information about the layout of such territories. In 914 the Chronicle records that Edward and his army stayed at Buckingham for four weeks, and says that during this time '*yldestan menn þe to Bedaforda hyrdon 7 eac mænige þara ðe to Hamtune hyrdon*' ('the principal men who belonged to Bedford, and also many of those who belonged to Northampton') came there and accepted Edward as their lord.[115] Admittedly this statement contains no specific territorial connotations, and could merely refer to the 'principal men' who were 'garrisoned' at Bedford and Northampton, rather than who lived in 'districts' focused on those places. But the impression that, in the case of Northampton at least, the Chronicle refers to a defined district focused on that place is re-enforced when this annal is viewed in conjunction with that of 917, which records that '*eal se here þe to Hamtune hierde norþ of Weolud*' ('all the army which belonged to Northampton as far north as the Welland')

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[112] ASC, MS. 'A', 918; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 68; Whitelock, *EHD I*, p. 216.
[113] ASC, MSS 'B', 'C', & 'D', 917; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 214.
[114] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D'; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 65; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 48; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, pp. 73-74; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 38; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212.
[115] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', & 'D'; transcription: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 74; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 213; also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 66; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 49; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS D*, p. 40.

submitted to Edward and '*sohton hine him to hlaforde 7 to mundboran*' ('sought to have him as their lord and protector').[116]

The reference to the River Welland suggests that the army focused on Northampton was, in 917 at least, associated with an area that either included the Welland, or whose northern limits were defined by that river. The reference has been interpreted in both ways. On one hand, C.S. Taylor argued that the annal suggests that Northampton's territory extended beyond the north bank of the Welland, taking in an area north of the river that for some reason did not submit to Edward.[117] Alternatively, Cyril Hart has favoured the view that the Welland was the northern limit of the area subject to Northampton, and also implies that the river formed the boundary that divided a territory focused on Northampton from a similar one focused on Stamford, located on the River Welland, around 25 miles north-east of Northampton.[118] Both suggestions are possible. But our understanding of the meaning of Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's statement is hampered by the lack of specific information regarding the nature and full extent of the territory apparently focused on Northampton. At the time of Domesday Book, on the other hand, Northamptonshire incorporated a small section of land north of the Welland. This part of the shire was later drawn into Rutland, which was not considered to be a shire in 1086, but was in existence by the later twelfth century.[119] The area that was to become known as Rutland was divided between two shires at the time of Domesday Book: the wapentakes of Alstoe and

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[116] *ASC*, 'A', 917; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 68; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 215.
[117] Taylor, 'The Origin', p. 20, n. 2.
[118] C.R. Hart, *The Hidation of Northamptonshire* (Leicester University Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, 2nd series, 3, 1970), pp. 12-13; *idem*, 'Athelstan "Half King" and His Family', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2 (1973), pp. 138-40. The Welland is also mentioned in relation to Stamford in the late-tenth or early eleventh-century Chronicle of Æthelweard: A. Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi: The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), p. 51. Unfortunately, however, there is considerable disagreement over the intended meaning of the Æthelweard's statement regarding Stamford, and so the reliable light that it throws on territorial arrangements in this area is minimal: see Chapter 6.4, pp. 218-19.
[119] C. Phythian-Adams, 'Rutland Reconsidered', in Dornier (ed.), *Mercian Studies*, p. 63.

Martinsley, which would later form the northern part of the shire, appeared within the Nottinghamshire Domesday folios, whereas manors belonging to Witchley wapentake appear within the Northamptonshire folios.[120] By the late medieval period Witchley wapentake's southern boundary was marked by the River Welland, and may have been so before.[121] But unfortunately the obscurity of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's statement concerning the Welland is such that it is not possible to say whether the area arguably dependent on Northampton in 917 is perpetuated in the layout of the East Midland shires at the end of the eleventh century. If the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's statement regarding Northampton means that a district or territory focused on that place included land north of the Welland, it is possible that such an arrangement is reflected in the extent of Northamptonshire in 1086, represented by Witchley wapentake. But since the Chronicle's words can equally well be read as meaning that the Welland formed the northern limit of the area subject to Northampton, it is also possible that changes had been made to that area's territorial arrangements.

The Chronicle also implies that other places used as military centres by Scandinavian armies had territories or districts attached to them at this time, although it provides no further specific information about the actual layout of these areas. For instance, it is said that in that 913 armies rode out from Leicester and Northampton and '*brǽcon þone frið 7 slogon mænige menn at Hocenertune 7 þær onbutan* '

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[120] W. Page in *idem* (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Rutland Volume II* (London: The St Catherine Press, 1935), p. 1; F.R. Thorn (ed.) *Domesday Book: Rutland* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1980), notes. For discussion of the possible the territorial origins of Rutland: *ibid.*; Phythian-Adams, 'Rutland Reconsidered'.

[121] Like Staffordshire, reconstructing Northamptonshire's hundreds at the time of Domesday Book is no straightforward task. Frank and Caroline Thorn note that hundred headings are 'sporadic' within the text: F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Northamptonshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1979), notes.

('broke the peace and killed many men at Hook Norton and thereabouts').[122] This reference could be taken to mean Hook Norton lay outside of those districts focused on Leicester and Northampton, as indeed it was in 1086, when it was considered to be part of Oxfordshire (although this would hardly be surprising, particularly in relation to Leicester, which is situated well to the north of Hook Norton).[123]

The Chronicle may make a similarly non-specific reference to a territory centred on Derby in 917, saying that in this year Æthelflæd '*begeat þa burh mid eallum þam ðe þærto hyrde þe ys haten Deoraby*' (obtained the *burh* 'which is called Derby, with all that belongs to it').[124] Yet this fleeting reference in the Chronicle does not unequivocally refer to a defined territory focused on Derby, and could instead refer to an ill-defined area with that place at its centre (in the same non-specific way that one might, for instance, say 'in the Birmingham area' today). Indeed, other potential references to territories focused on military centres in the East Midlands are similarly obscure. In 917, for instance, the Chronicle records that once Huntingdon had been captured by Edward in 917, '*þær folc eal þæt to lafe wæs þara landleoda beag*' ('and all the people of that district who had survived submitted').[125] But once again, no specific information about the type and extent of this 'district' is provided, and the most recent edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, translated and edited by Michael Swanton, has done away with the term 'district' entirely in relation to this

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[122] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D'; transcription: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, pp. 73-74; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212; also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 65; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 48; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 38.
[123] DB, f. 158; C. Caldwell (ed.), *Domesday Book: Oxfordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978), 28,6.
[124] ASC, MSS 'B', 'C', & 'D', 917; transcription: O' Brien O' Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 214. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40.
[125] ASC, MS. 'A', 917; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 68; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, pp. 215-16.

annal, with Swanton adopting the more neutral translation of 'the whole tribe of the local people that there was left submitted to King Edward.'[126]

Although the places from which Scandinavian armies are recorded as operating in the early tenth century are candidates for having been provided with defences of the sort that have been found at Hereford, Tamworth and Winchcombe,[127] it is unclear whether and how the districts apparently focused on them would have related to any pre-existing military territories of the sort proposed by Bassett. That is to say, we do not know whether Scandinavian armies would have re-used or ignored the region's existing administrative arrangements. Moreover, the nature of Scandinavian rule in the East Midlands at this time is unclear: we do not, for instance, know how far each of the Scandinavian armies were autonomous units, and whether any boundaries between their respective territories were fixed and long lasting or fluid and ephemeral. Thus, while the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides good grounds for thinking that the places in the East Midlands used as military centres by Scandinavian armies in the early tenth century were the focus of dependent territories, its information regarding the nature and extent of such territories is too imprecise for firm conclusions to be drawn about how far they were reflected in the layout of the region's shires. Nor do we know whether they were similar to any earlier administrative structures – although the possibility that they did remains open. Indeed, considering that most of the places in the East Midlands from which Scandinavian

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[126] M.J. Swanton, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (London: Phoenix Press, 2000), p. 103. The 'territorial connotations' contained within the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's statement, however, are in the prefix *land-* ('land', 'country', 'region', 'district', 'province'): Bosworth & (eds), *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 617.

[127] Bassett, 'Divide and Rule?', pp. 77-78.

armies are said to have operated went on to become shire towns, it is not unlikely that the layout of its shires might reflect something of earlier arrangements.[128]

5.6 Conclusions

Although in theory Staffordshire's original geographical extent seems very likely to have been influenced by the roles and functions that the shire served, it is very hard to say how, in practice, these roles influenced its territorial origins and early history. For instance, Stafford's role as a military centre would almost certainly have had a direct bearing on the geographical extent of its dependent shire territory; indeed, it is logical to think that whatever else influenced the shire's original extent – for instance, the natural topography of the Staffordshire area or pre-existing territorial arrangements – one consideration must have been that the territory assigned to Stafford should be reasonably coherent and of a viable size for its military function to be fulfilled. But it has not been possible to say how far, in practice, this role would have dictated the course taken by the shire's boundary.

Connected to this issue is the abiding problem of Staffordshire's Domesday hidage total. It is been seen that how the *c.* 500 hides carried by the shire in the late eleventh century relate to its original hidage assessment is an open question.[129] But it has also been seen that Domesday Book records that one man used to be called out from each hide in Cheshire to repair Chester's wall and bridge.[130] There is no reason to doubt that similar obligations were laid on Staffordshire's landholders for the supply and maintenance of the shire town's defences, in which case the shire's comparatively low hidage assessment in 1086 could imply that Stafford's defencsive

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[128] The exception is Stamford. For discussion of 'Stamfordshire' and the East Midland shires: Hart, 'Athelstan', pp. 138-40; Phythian-Adams, 'Rutland', pp. 69-72; P. Stafford, *The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985), pp. 141-42.
[129] For further discussion of Staffordshire's original hidage assessment: Chapter 3.
[130] DB, f. 262; Morgan (ed.), *DB: Cheshire*, C21. See above, pp. 136-37.

ramparts were relatively small in length. David Hill thinks that this is a real possibility, and has noted that if the formula that appears in Version A of the Burghal Hidage were applied to Staffordshire's earliest known hidage total, the resulting wall length would only be sufficient to block the neck of land at the northern end of Stafford's central 'island' peninsula.[131] But we have seen that it cannot be assumed that the Burghal Hidage's formula can be used to calculate the lengths of defensive circuits in the West Midlands. Moreover, if Staffordshire's Domesday hidage total really does reflect the number of hides originally assigned to the shire, and if the geographical extent of the shire was determined by the number of hides needed to supply Stafford's defensive circuit, this leaves us with two equally unattractive alternatives for the course of that circuit. Firstly, Stafford's defensive circuit was for some reason very small compared to those of other West Midland shire towns; or, secondly, that the river and marshland sides of the defended area were left (apparently) mainly unmanned, undefended and unsupplied. Ultimately, however, without knowing how far the shire's hidage total in 1086 reflects its original assessment there are limits to what can be achieved through this line of enquiry.

In relation to the two hypotheses for the origins of the West Midland shires set out at the start of the thesis, the chapter has uncovered no strong evidence which shows that Staffordshire was effectively created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in which were no existing sub-provincial territories, or in one in which existing administrative territories were ignored when the shire boundaries were first laid out. Nor, however, has it found strong grounds to argue that the shire certainly reflected pre-existing land-units, or represented the amalgamation or reworking of

[131] Hill, 'The Shiring', p. 151.

such land-units.[132] Nevertheless, given that there is strong evidence that Tamworth had a defensive circuit by the early ninth century, and considering the pre-tenth-century obligation of landholders to provide men for the maintenance and supply of fortified places, the possibility that Staffordshire's original geographical extent was influenced by the layout of earlier military arrangements in that area remains a real one. Yet if so, it is also clear that changes to those arrangements must have occurred in the vicinity of Tamworth. Indeed, it has been seen that the decision that Tamworth would not become a shire town clearly had important implications for Staffordshire's territorial origins as the boundary of any shire territory focused on Stafford would not have cut through the heart of Tamworth had it likewise become a shire town.

We also know that the Mercian kingdom was divided between areas under 'English' and Scandinavian rule in 877, and have seen that in the second decade of the tenth century, Scandinavian armies were operating from places close to Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary, such as Derby and Leicester. This means that were the shire to reflect any pre-existing territorial arrangements, such arrangements would need to have survived the Scandinavian raids of the later ninth and early tenth centuries and the resultant partitioning of the Mercian kingdom. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

[132] See Chapter 1.3.1.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored how the roles served by Staffordshire influenced its territorial origins and early history, and considered whether pre-existing military arrangements in the Staffordshire area might have affected the shire's original extent. In turn, this chapter will investigate how much can be reliably said about the impact of later ninth-century and early tenth-century Scandinavian activity on the Staffordshire area.[1] It has already been seen that parts of the East Midlands were under Scandinavian control in the second decade of the tenth century, and this chapter will assess whether Scandinavian rule may have extended further west, thereby impinging on the future territory of the shire. It will also consider the probable impact of any period of Scandinavian rule on administrative arrangements in the Staffordshire area. That is to say, is a period under Scandinavian rule likely to have disrupted administrative structures to such an extent that the shire's original layout was unlikely to have been influenced by pre-existing territories (i.e. because the shire's boundaries by necessity were drawn on a 'blank slate')? Alternatively, might the impact of Scandinavian rule have been less severe than this?

The impact of later ninth- and early tenth-century Scandinavian raids on England is an extremely controversial subject and has spawned a vast literature. In the

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[1] Old English *wicing* (often equated with modern English 'Viking') occurs only rarely in surviving sources from the Anglo-Saxon period, and does not seem to have been used exclusively to refer to raiders from Scandinavia until the tenth century. Its use appears to have died out during the late Middle Ages, and it was only in the nineteenth century that 'Viking' became the standard term for the Scandinavian invaders: J.D. Richards, *Viking-Age England* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), p. 11. Richard Coates, however, has recently argued that a simple equation of *wicing* and Viking cannot reliably be made: R. Coates, 'New Light on Old English Wicks: the Progeny of Latin *vicus*', *Nomina*, 22 (1999), pp. 77-82. 'Viking' is in any case a somewhat pejorative term, and so 'Scandinavian' will instead be used throughout this chapter, except when quoting from sources in which the raiders are called 'Danes', or when referring to the so-called 'Viking Age' (for example in relation to 'Viking-Age sculpture').

early twentieth century scholars often argued that the impact of Scandinavian raiding and settlement was both acute and long lasting. But since the 1950s the tide of opinion has turned, with scholars arguing, amongst other things, that the size of Scandinavian armies and numbers of Scandinavian settlers had previously been overestimated; that Scandinavian settlement was less dense than was originally thought; that the apparent institutional distinctiveness of northern and eastern England in the late Anglo-Saxon period owed as much to terminological differences as it did to real distinctiveness; and that contemporary Anglo-Scandinavian relations should not be seen only in terms of conflict and hostility.[2] Many of these issues lie beyond the scope of this chapter, which instead will focus on assessing whether the Staffordshire area fell under Scandinavian rule (as it is this issue that seems the most likely to have had direct consequences for territorial arrangements there). Admittedly, merely raising this subject risks giving it an undue significance. But considering that Scandinavian raiding armies were operating in and around the future shire in the later ninth and early tenth centuries, and that nearby places, like Derby, were certainly under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the tenth century, the 'Scandinavian issue' cannot be ignored.

Assessing the impact of later ninth- or early tenth-century Scandinavian activity in and around Staffordshire may, then, have important implications for our understanding of the circumstances leading to the establishment of that land-unit: this is immediately prior to the time when the West Midland region seems to have been

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[2] For an example of the 'older' view: F.M. Stenton, 'The Danes in England', in D.M. Stenton (ed.), *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: Being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 136-65 [originally published in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 13 (1927), pp. 136-65]. For an early challenge to certain aspects of this view: P.H. Sawyer, 'The Density of the Danish Settlement in England', *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, 6 (1957), pp. 1-17. For an overview of many of the debates concerning the Scandinavian impact on England (especially those concerning Scandinavian settlement): D.M. Hadley, *The Vikings in England: Settlement, Society and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 1-9 & 19-21.

brought under more direct West Saxon control and so a better understanding of the extent of Scandinavian political control in the West Midlands may provide important clues towards the condition of the administrative geography 'inherited' by the West Saxon monarchy in the early tenth century.[3]

6.2 Scandinavian activity in Mercia in the later ninth and early tenth centuries

Our surviving narrative sources are dominated by descriptions of Scandinavian raids in the later ninth century. These raids seem to have resulted in large-scale changes to England's political landscape, with the Northumbrian and East Anglian kingdoms conquered by Scandinavian armies in 867 and 870 respectively; parts of Mercia brought under Scandinavian control between 874 and 877 (and the kingdom divided between Scandinavian and Mercian rulers in 877); and Wessex apparently under heavy pressure from Scandinavian raiding throughout the 870s, until Alfred the Great's victory at Edington in 878.[4] But in the second decade of the tenth century the situation was reversed, and Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd, the latter ruling in Mercia, re-established 'English' authority in many areas then under Scandinavian rule.[5]

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that several Scandinavian armies were operating in Mercia throughout this period, and while the precise location of their raids is recorded unevenly, we know that some occurred in and around the

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[3] See Chapter 1. This statement is somewhat at odds with the concept of the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons', recently developed by Simon Keynes, which postulates that in the late ninth and early tenth centuries Wessex and Mercia were effectively part of a single polity, under the rulership firstly of Alfred the Great and then of Edward the Elder. Keynes's model is discussed below, pp. 200-09.

[4] For an overview of Scandinavian activity in England in the later ninth century: S. Keynes, 'The Vikings in England, *c.* 790-1016', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 52-64; Richards, *Viking Age England*, pp. 27-33; P. Wormald, 'The Ninth Century', in J. Campbell (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), pp. 132-34.

[5] For an overview: E. John, 'The Age of Edgar', in Campbell (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 160-61; Richards, *Viking Age England*, pp. 29-30.

Staffordshire area.[6] The chapter will therefore begin by reviewing what narrative sources, particularly the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, tell us about the movements of these armies within Mercia, about the kingdom's division in 877, and about Æthelflæd's subsequent recovery of places then under Scandinavian rule. This will, firstly, provide some context in which to place all subsequent discussion of the Scandinavian impact on the Staffordshire area; and, secondly, distinguish at the outset between different phases of Scandinavian activity there: it is easy to forget that we are dealing with a period of approximately 50 years, during which time the extent of Scandinavian political control in the Midlands is unlikely to have remained static. Indeed, although there is much that the narrative sources do not tell us, they at least provide a series of specific points onto which the other available evidence can be mapped.[7]

Scandinavian raiders make their first appearance in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 789, when three ships of 'Northmen' are said to have come to England.[8] But it is

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[6] Old English *here*, usually used by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to refer to enemy (i.e. Scandinavian) forces, is translated as 'army' or 'Danish army' by Dorothy Whitelock: D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents Volume I* c. *500-1042* (London: Eyre Methuen, 2nd edn, 1979) [hereafter *EHD I*]. The word, however, has a wider semantic range than this translation implies, with Bosworth-Toller offering the following possible definitions: 'an army, a host, a multitude, a large predatory band': J. Bosworth & T.N. Toller (eds), *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882), p. 532; and 'a body of armed men': J. Bosworth and T.N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), p. 537. Although 'a body of armed men' implies a smaller, and, arguably, less well-organised force than an 'army', for the sake of consistency *here* will be translated as 'army'. This translation, however, is not intended to imply all Scandinavian *here*s recorded in the Chronicle were of the same size or composition.

[7] Discussing the nature of Scandinavian England before the reign of Edward the Elder, Lesley Abrams argues that 'greater clarity will be gained if the different periods and different regions of Scandinavian England are distinguished in our minds, their different contexts considered and different histories taken on board': L. Abrams, 'Edward the Elder's Danelaw', in N.J. Higham & D.H. Hill (eds), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 140.

[8] All manuscripts except 'A' specify that the ships belonged to *'Norðmanna*' ('Northmen'): Anglo-Saxon Chronicle [hereafter ASC], MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F': 789; Old English text: K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume V: MS. C* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*], p. 50; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 180. Also: J.M. Bately (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume III: MS A* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*], p. 39; S. Taylor (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume IV: MS B* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*], p. 28; G.P. Cubbin (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VI: MS D* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*], p. 16; S. Irvine (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VII: MS. E* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*], p. 41; P.S.

only in the period after 835 that our sources give the impression that Scandinavian raids on England began in earnest, a situation which seems to have grown worse in 866, when it is said that a '*micel hæþen here*' ('great heathen [i.e. Scandinavian] army') came into England.[9] In 868 this army is said to have over-wintered in Nottingham, considered to be part of Mercia at that time. Although it is recorded that the West Saxons and Mercians besieged Nottingham, no 'serious' battle occurred, and the Mercians eventually made peace with (i.e. 'bought off') the Scandinavian army.[10]

In 874, however, the position of the Mercian monarchy deteriorated. In this year the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that the Scandinavian army which had over-wintered at Lindsey took up winter quarters at Repton, located only two miles east of the late eleventh-century boundary between Staffordshire and Derbyshire. The army is said at this time to have driven the Mercian king, Burgred, across the sea. Further, we are told that

> '*7 þy ilcan gere hie sealdon Ceolwulfe anum unwisum cinges ðegne Myrcna rice to healed\n/e, 7 he him aþas swor 7 gislas sealed þæt hit him gearo wære swilce dæge swa hie hit habban woldon 7 he gearo wære mid him selfum 7 mid eallum ðam þe him gelæstan woldon to þæs heres ðearfe*' ('and the same year they [i.e. the aforementioned army] gave the kingdom of the Mercians to be held by Ceolwulf [II], a foolish king's thegn; and he swore oaths to them and gave hostages, that it [i.e. the Mercian kingdom] should be ready for them on whatever day they wished to have it, and he would be ready, himself and all who would follow him, at the enemy's service').[11]

Baker (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition: Volume VIII: MS F* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000) [hereafter: *ASC: Collaborative: MS. F*], pp. 53-54.

[9] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', & 'E', 866; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 58; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 191. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 47; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 34; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 24; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 48.

[10] '*7 þær nan hefelic gefeoht ne wearð, 7 Myrce frið namon wið þone here*': ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F', 868; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 58; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 192. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 47; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 34; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 24; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 48; Baker (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. F*, p. 67.

[11] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', & 'E', 874; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 60; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 194. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A* p. 49; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B* p. 36; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 26; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, pp. 49-50.

Upon leaving Repton, the army seems to have divided into two; one part, led by Healfdene, went into Northumbria, and in 876 is said to have '*Norðanhymbra land gedælde 7 ergende wæron 7 hira tilgende wæron*' ('shared out the land of the Northumbrians, and they [i.e. the army] proceeded to plough and to support themselves'); while the other part, led by Guthrum, Oscetel, and Anwend, went to Cambridge.[12] But in 877 this army returned to Mercia, whereupon, according to the Chronicle, the Mercian kingdom suffered a similar fate to that of Northumbria, as the army '*hit gedældon sum 7 sum Ceolwulfe sealdon*' ('shared out some of it, and gave some to Ceolwulf').[13] Unfortunately, the Chronicle provides no specific information about where on the ground this division ran: i.e. which parts of Mercia remained under Ceolwulf II's authority, and which were now under Scandinavian rule. This chapter will therefore assess if further light can be shed on this issue.[14]

In the wake of what appears to have been a decisive victory by Alfred over Guthrum's forces at Edington in 878, Guthrum's army is said to have spent a year at Cirencester, before moving from there into East Anglia, where it '*gesæt þæt land gedælde*' ('settled … and shared out the land').[15] After this, little more is heard in the

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[12] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', & 'E', 875-876; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 61; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, pp. 194-95. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, pp. 49-50; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 36; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 26; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 50.

[13] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', & 'E', 877; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 61; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 195. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 50; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 36; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 27; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 50.

[14] Æthelweard's chronicle, however, implies that the division of Mercia occurred in 874, at the same time as Burgred was driven across the sea. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, this Chronicle records that in 877 the Mercian kingdom was ravaged, and that the army associated with Guthrum spent time at Gloucester: A. Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi: The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1962), pp. 41-42.

[15] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F', 878-880; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, pp. 61-62; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, pp. 195-96. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, pp. 50-51; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, pp. 36-37; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 27; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, pp. 50-51; Baker (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. F*, pp. 71-72.

Chronicle of Guthrum, or the army with which he is associated, until his death in 890.[16] Instead, for the next 12 years the Chronicle's main attention is focused on the continental activities of another Scandinavian army, which is said to have assembled in 879 at Fulham, but went overseas into the Frankish Empire in the same year as Guthrum's army settled in East Anglia.

The Chronicle records that Scandinavian armies returned from the continent in 892,[17] and it seems that in 895 an army once again over-wintered close to the Staffordshire area. The army, which had been based for a time on the River Lea, 20 miles above London, is said to have abandoned its ships and moved overland until it reached *Cwatbricge* (probably Quatford, two miles south of Bridgnorth), i.e. adjacent to Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary with Shropshire. The army remained there for the winter, and is said to have built a fortress, before dividing into two in the following year, with one force going into Northumbria and the other into East Anglia.[18] But the Chronicle's next record of Scandinavian raiding within Mercia is less precise. In 903 it is said that Æthelwold, the son of Æthelred (Alfred's predecessor as West Saxon king), induced the army in East Anglia to break the peace,

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[16] Having said that, in 885 the Chronicle also records that the '*se here on Eastenglum bræc frið wið Ælfred cing*' ('the army in East Anglia violated the peace with King Alfred'): ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', & 'E', 885; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 64. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 53; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 39; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 29; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 52; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 199. For Guthrum's death: ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F', 890. Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 54; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 40; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 65; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 30; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 53; Baker (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative MS. F*, p. 75; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 200.

[17] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F', 892; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 55; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 40; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 66; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 30; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 53; Baker (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. F*, p. 76; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 200.

[18] The army '*þæt geweorc worhton*' ('built that fortress'): ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D', 895; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, pp. 69-70; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 205. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 59; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 44; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, pp. 33-34. For further discussion of *Brycg*: Chapter 5.4.1.

resulting in its harrying 'all Mercia' until it reached Cricklade (Wiltshire).[19] How much should be read into the Chronicle's statement that 'all' of Mercia was harried is unclear, but given that the army moved (from East Anglia?) towards Cricklade, and considering that London seems to have been under Æthelred's authority since 886 (meaning that the chronicler's conception of what constituted 'Mercia' at this time probably extended well south of the Midlands), the Chronicle's statement regarding Mercia should perhaps be viewed in connection with the south of England alone.[20]

Fortunately, we have more specific information regarding the next recorded Scandinavian raid into Mercia. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 910 the army in Northumbria broke the peace, whereupon it '*hergodon ofer Myrcna land*' ('ravaged over Mercia'), resulting in a battle at Tettenhall, situated in South-West Staffordshire.[21] A battle between the 'Danes' and the 'English' at Tettenhall is likewise recorded in the so-called Mercian Register,[22] a set of short annals covering the years 902 to 924 which focus on Mercian affairs, and which appear as a distinct block of text in Manuscripts 'B' and 'C' of the Chronicle, where they are inserted between the annals for 915 and 934 (with some of their content also appearing in Manuscripts 'D' and 'E').[23] But the most detailed account of the battle is provided by

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[19] '*...þæt hi hergoden ofer eall Myrcna land oþ hi common to Creaccgelade*': ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D', 903; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 72. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 62; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 46; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 36; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 208. MS. 'A' records that Æthelwold 'seduced' (rather than 'induced') the East Anglian army to break the peace.

[20] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F', 886; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 53; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 39; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 64; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 29; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 52; Baker (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. F*, pp. 73-74; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 196.

[21] ASC, MS. 'C', 910; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 73; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 210.

[22] '*On þisum gere Engle 7 Dene gefuhton æt Teotanheale, Engle sige naman*' ('the English and the Danes fought at Tettenhall, and the English were victorious'): ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 910; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 75; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 210. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 49.

[23] Here, however, the information is added to the appropriate annal within the 'main' chronicle, rather than surviving as a distinct block of text which is out of chronological sequence (as is the case in manuscripts 'B' and 'C').

the eccentric Latin chronicler, Æthelweard. His chronicle, widely thought to be a translation of a now lost version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,[24] states that Mercia was ravaged as far south as the River Avon [i.e. the Bristol Avon], where, according to Æthelweard, the boundary of the West Saxons and Mercians began.[25] Æthelweard records that the West Saxons and the Mercians moved against the Scandinavian army as it crossed from the eastern side of the River Severn '*pontem ordine litterato qui uulgo Cuatbricge nuncupatur*' ('over a *pons* to give the Latin spelling, which is called [*Cuatbricge*, probably Quatford] by the common people'). He goes on to say that a battle ensued on 5th August, although unlike the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle he locates this at Wednesfield, three miles east of Tettenhall.[26]

While we can therefore be certain that Scandinavian armies were raiding in and around the Staffordshire area between 895 and 910, it is important to remember that these raids took place in a different context from those of the 870s, and, as such, the latter raids are arguably less likely to have had direct consequences for territorial arrangements in the future shire. Indeed, while the raids of the 870s resulted in Scandinavian political control being established in parts of the Mercian kingdom, this does not appear to be true of the events of the last decade of the ninth century and the first decade of the tenth: i.e., unlike the 870s, raiding between 895 and 910 seems to

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[24] For further discussion of Æthelweard and his sources: below, p. 206.

[25] '*Vastantur passim Myrciorum arua a tempestate prædicta et penitus usque ad Afne fluenta, ubi inchoat Occidentalium terminus Anglorum nec non Myrciorum.*' ('The fields of the Mercians were ravaged on all sides by the throng we spoke about, and deeply, as far as the streams of the Avon, where the boundary of the West Saxons and the Mercians begins.'): Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, p. 52.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 53. Campbell locates the bridge at Bridgnorth, but we have already seen that *Cuatbricge* is more likely to be Quatford: Chapter 5.4.1. Regarding the battle at Tettenhall/Wednesfield, Æthelweard says '*insistunt pugnæ mora nec attenta in Vuodnesfelda campo, Angli uictoriæ optinere numen, Danorumque fugatur exercitus telo oppressus. Facta hæc memorantur Quinta in die mensis Augusti*' ('they joined battle without protracted delay on the field of Wednesfield; the English enjoyed the blessing of victory; the army of the Danes fled, overcome by the armed force. These events are recounted as done on the fifth day of the month of August'). Manuscripts 'B' and 'C' of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle locate the battle at Tettenhall, and Æthelweard's authority for placing it at Wednesfield is uncertain, but the variation in the name of the battle may reflect where the rival armies had camped before the battle.

have been conducted by armies that apparently had little interest in establishing themselves as rulers within the Mercian kingdom, or else were unable to do so.

Finally, in the second decade of the tenth century the 'English' rulers appear to have won back the initiative, and Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd (now acting alone in Mercia after her husband's death in 911) re-established their control in areas of southern and midland England at that time under Scandinavian rule. The Mercian Register, for instance, records that two fortified places in the East Midlands submitted to Æthelflæd around this time. In 917 it is said that Æthelflæd '*Gode fultmigendum foran to Hlæfmæssan begeat þa burh mid eallum þam ðe þærto hyrde þe ys haten Deoraby*' ('with the help of God before Lammas obtained the [fortified place] which is called Derby, with all that belongs to it'), apparently after a battle.[27] Similarly we hear that in 918 she '*begeat on hire geweald mid Godes fultume on foreweardne gear gesybsumlice þa burh æt Ligraceastre, 7 se mæsta dæl þæs herges þe ðærto hirde wearð underþeoded*' ('peacefully obtained control of the [fortified place] of Leicester, in the early part of the year; and the greater part of the army which belonged to it was subjected').[28]

Nevertheless, the precise circumstances in which Scandinavian rule had been established at Derby and Leicester are not made clear by our narrative sources. It is usually thought that the so-called 'five boroughs' (Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham and Stamford), along with other places in the East Midlands from which Scandinavian armies are recorded as operating in the second decade of the tenth century, like Northampton, had been under Scandinavian rule since the division of

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[27] Four of Æthelred's thegns are said to have been killed within the gates (of Derby): ASC, MSS 'B', 'C', & 'D', 917; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 214. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40.

[28] ASC, MSS 'B', 'C', & 'D', 918. Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 216. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40.

Mercia in 877. But it is not until the 910s (i.e. around 40 years after Mercia's division) that we are explicitly told that Scandinavian armies were based in the East Midlands, meaning that the longevity and stability of Scandinavian rule in that part of the Midlands is unknown.[29] Had these places, for instance, been under Scandinavian political control since 877, or had some or all been 'captured' by Scandinavian rulers at an unrecorded point between 877 and 910? How static was the division between 'English' and Scandinavian control in Mercia? That is to say, while places like Derby and Leicester were certainly in Scandinavian hands by the second decade of the tenth century, were there times between 877 and 910 when they had been under 'English' control?

Nor do our narrative sources provide any specific detail regarding the particulars of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands in the second decade of the tenth century. Did this consist of a single, cohesive, 'Scandinavian polity', or should we envisage a loose 'confederation' of centres under Scandinavian control, which sometimes operated together? Alternatively, might there originally have been a single Scandinavian polity which subsequently fragmented into several smaller units? The picture presented by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is obscure: in 913, for example, we are told that the army from Northampton, on its way home from Hook Norton (Oxfordshire), met another *flocrade* ('raiding band') which rode out against Luton, a situation which implies a fairly loose confederation of centres; but in 917 it is said that '*se here bræc þone friþ of Hamtune 7 of Liberaceastre 7 þonan norþan*' ('the

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[29] For example: in 913 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that *'her on geare rad se here ut ofer Eastron of Hamtune 7 of Ligreceastre, 7 bræcon þone frið 7 slogon mænige menn æt Hocenertune 7 þær onbutan*' ('in this year the army from Northampton and Leicester rode out after Easter and broke the peace, and killed many men at Hook Norton and round and about there'): ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D', 913; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, pp. 61-62; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 205. Also: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 65; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 48; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 38.

army from Northampton and Leicester and north of these places broke the peace'), implying co-operation on a wider scale.[30]

The remainder of this chapter will therefore consider how much can reliably be said about the extent of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands in the later ninth and early tenth centuries, and, specifically, whether Scandinavian political control is likely to have impinged on the area that came to be known as Staffordshire. This issue could also have important implications for our understanding of the territorial history of Lichfield diocese. We have already seen that the diocesan arrangements recorded in the Taxatio Ecclesiastica of 1291, our earliest opportunity to map England's dioceses, are often thought, in essentials, to reflect the pre- tenth-century situation.[31] Conversely, however, it is often argued that the later ninth- and early tenth century Scandinavian raids disrupted dioceses in eastern England.[32] Although there are no

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[30] For 913: above, n. 29. For 917: ASC, MS. 'A', 917; Old English text: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 66; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 214. While Whitelock translates *flocrade* as 'raiding band', Bosworth-Toller offer the following definitions: 'a riding company, a troop': Bosworth & Toller (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 294; also: 'a troop of soldiers, band, legion': Bosworth & Toller (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement*, p. 226. Dawn Hadley suggests that Scandinavian control over the North and East Midlands was fragmented, noting that 'control over these regions was divided among a group of men below the rank of the king, such as *jarls* and *holds*' and that coins were minted at various locations in these regions in the late ninth century and early tenth, for various different rulers: Hadley *The Vikings*, pp. 55-56.

[31] See Chapter 4.5.2. For example, in relation to Worcester: S.R. Bassett, 'In Search of the Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms', in *idem* (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), p. 6; *idem*, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', *Midland History*, 15 (2000), pp. 9-10; also: J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer & F.M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Warwickshire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), pp. xvi-xvii; C.R. Hart, 'The Kingdom of Mercia', in A. Dornier (ed.), *Mercian Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977), p. 47.

[32] At Leicester, for example, the last Anglo-Saxon bishop was Ceolred, appointed between 840 and 844, who died between 869 and 888. He was succeeded by Alhheard, Bishop of Dorchester (where the see was to remain until it was moved to Lincoln after the Norman Conquest), at some point between 869 and 888: J. Barrow, 'Survival and Mutation: Ecclesiastical Institutions in the Danelaw in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', in D.M. Hadley & J.D. Richards (eds), *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), p. 157. Julia Barrow, however, notes that although Scandinavian raids are often blamed for disruption to diocesan arrangements in eastern England in the ninth century, 'the precise cause is a matter for debate': *ibid.* For further discussion: J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 291-329. When discussing methods of assessing the effect of the Scandinavian incursions on pre-Viking Age churches, Blair argues that the widespread absence of 'older' charters probably indicates disruption: 'their almost total non-survival in northern and eastern England', he says, 'strongly suggests that minsters in these regions suffered greater, or more violent, disruption than those in the west and south': *ibid.*, pp. 295-97. On this basis, the obscurity of the pre-Viking Age situation in Staffordshire, could indicate heavy disruption there: *ibid.*, pp. 296 & 308-09.

recorded instances of Scandinavian activity at Lichfield, we nevertheless must consider whether its location, just over 15 miles south-west of Repton and around 20 miles south-west of Derby, made it an easy target for Scandinavian raiding armies. Indeed, given that Lichfield was, at the very least, close to the border of areas under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the tenth century, it may have suffered greater disruption at this time than those dioceses further west and south (potentially meaning that its late thirteenth-century extent is less likely to perpetuate the pre-tenth-century situation than elsewhere).[33]

We know of two territorial divisions made between 'English' and Scandinavian rulers which may have impinged on the Staffordshire area. The chapter will consider them in turn: firstly, a 'peace' made in the late ninth century between Alfred the Great and Guthrum; and, secondly, the division of Mercia in 877.

6.3 Alfred and Guthrum's 'peace'[34]

The most pressing problem that we face is a general lack of reliable information about where, on the ground, divisions between 'English' and Scandinavian rule ran. An exception is a *frið* ('peace') made between Alfred the Great and Guthrum in the late ninth century, which has attracted a considerable amount of attention from scholars, and which defines a boundary that is often thought to have encroached on the area which came to be known as Staffordshire.

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[33] Michelle Brown, however, has argued that in the second half of the ninth century, Lichfield was 'a prominent causality of the Viking incursions', and, indeed, that at that time it was 'taken by the Vikings', although without specifying the basis of her view: M.P. Brown, 'The Lichfield Angel and the Manuscript Context: Lichfield as a Centre of Insular Art', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 160 (2007), pp. 9 & 17.

[34] My understanding of this document has been greatly enhanced by discussions with various members of the Department of Medieval History at the University of Birmingham, following a paper given at the department's research seminar on 29 January, 2007, and by discussions with my supervisor, Steven Bassett, on 31 January, 2007.

The document focuses mainly on the crimes that might arise between the two sides (including terms for compensation if either an '*Engliscne*' ('Englishman') or '*Deniscne*' ('Dane') is slain), and the conduct of trade between them.[35] In the words of Paul Kershaw the 'peace' can be viewed as one example of those 'written guidelines, codes, or treaties that sought to formalize and regulate interaction between incomers and established communities' produced in the early Middle Ages.[36] The extant versions of the document do not include a date, and so we cannot be certain when the 'peace' was originally drawn up. Nevertheless, it is often thought to have been composed between 886 and 890: i.e. between the time when Alfred is said to have 'occupied' London (located to the south-west of the boundary defined in the text), and the time when Guthrum died.[37]

This view, however, assumes that when Mercia was divided in 877 London passed into Scandinavian hands, and that it remained under Scandinavian control until it was 'liberated' by Alfred in 886. But in reality we have no specific information regarding the fate of London after 877: indeed, we shall see that numismatic evidence indicates that London was probably under 'English' control in the late 870s.[38] The dating of the original document to 886x890 is also based on the fact that the 'peace' styles Alfred as acting on behalf of '*ealles Angelcynnes witan*' ('the councillors of all the English race'), and it is likewise not until 886 that Alfred is said to have received the submission of all the English people (*Angelcyn*) not under subjection to the

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[35] Old English Text: F.L. Attenborough (ed.), *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), p. 98; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, no. 34, p. 416. For discussion of the legal implications of the 'peace': P. Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty: Scripting Accommodation and Interaction in Viking Age England', in Hadley & Richards (eds), *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 52-56.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[37] For example: R.H.C. Davis, 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', *English Historical Review*, 97 (1982), p. 803; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, no. 34, p. 416. For the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's account of Alfred obtaining London in 886: above, p. 186.

[38] See below, pp. 203-04.

Danes.[39] Yet this style need not be read literally: Alfred may well have regarded himself as acting on behalf of the 'councillors of all the English' before 886, for instance once Northumbria, East Anglia and Mercia had been conquered.[40] Thus, the original 'peace' should, strictly speaking, be dated to 871x890, i.e. between Alfred's accession and Guthrum's death, although it does not seem unreasonable to date it to 880x90 as the text explicitly connects Guthrum's rule with East Anglia, where we have seen that his army is said to have settled in 880. Yet the absence of a date is unfortunate, since interpretations of the document's boundary statement are intimately bound up with its date, and it is therefore very easy to be drawn into circular arguments concerning both the date of the original 'peace', and the course of the boundary described within it.

The 'peace' is often known as the 'Treaty of Wedmore', thereby connecting it to the ceremony said to have taken place at Wedmore following Guthrum's baptism in 878, although nothing in the document's text suggests that it was promulgated in the wake of that event.[41] It survives in two versions, both of them in C.C.C.C., MS. 383 (probably copied out around 1100 at St Paul's, London),[42] which are usually referred to as 'B' and 'B2' respectively, a usage originally adopted by Felix Liebermann in his

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[39] Old English Text: Attenborough (ed.), *The Laws*, p. 98; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, no. 34, p. 416.

[40] D.N. Dumville, 'The Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum', in *idem*, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 19-20; Hadley, *The Vikings*, p. 31.

[41] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F', 878; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 51; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 37; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 62; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 27; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 51; Baker (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. F*, pp. 71-72; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 196. Simon Keynes, however, argues that the 'peace' could not represent whatever terms were agreed at Wedmore because Guthrum's Danes were not then settled in East Anglia: S. Keynes, 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in M.A.S. Blackburn & D.N. Dumville (eds), *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), p. 33, n. 146. Scholars have perhaps connected the 'peace' with Wedmore because this is one of the few known ceremonies in which Alfred and Guthrum took part (although the document may well originally have been composed in the wake of an otherwise unrecorded meeting between the two kings).

[42] Dumville, 'The Treaty', p. 21; Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty', p. 48; S. Keynes, 'Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 233.

Der Gesetze der Anglelsachsen. Of the two versions 'B' is usually printed and quoted, probably because it contains the fullest information, incorporating several clauses that are absent from 'B2'.[43] Although now part of the same manuscript, 'B2' appears near the beginning of that manuscript and 'B' near the end. This separation, and the fact that there are a number of differences between the two versions (which will be noted when necessary), indicate to Simon Keynes that the copyist probably derived them from different exemplars.[44]

Version 'B' begins by stating that '*Ðis is ðæt frið ðæt Ælfred cyninc 7 Gyðrum cyning 7 ealles Angelcynnes witan 7 eal seo ðeod ðe on Eastænglum beoð ealle gecwedan habbað*' ('this is the peace which King Alfred and King Guthrum and the councillors of all the English race and all the people which is in East Anglia have all agreed on and confirmed with oaths').[45] Immediately afterwards there is a statement concerning the boundaries agreed by the two kings:

> '*Ærest ymb ure landgemæra: up on Temese, 7 ðonne up on Ligan, 7 andlang Ligan oð hire æwylm, ðonne on gerihte to Bedanforda, ðonne up on Usan oð Wætlingastræt*.' ('First concerning our boundaries: up the Thames, and then up the Lea, and along the Lea to its source, then in a straight line to Bedford, then up the Ouse to the Watling Street.')[46]

There are, however, two differences between the boundary statement recorded in 'B2' and the one which appears in 'B'. Firstly, Version 'B' uses the first person in both the boundary statement and throughout the main body of the document, while 'B2' consistently uses the third, meaning that 'our boundaries' in 'B' is rendered as 'their

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[43] Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty', p. 48.
[44] Keynes, 'Royal Government', p. 233.
[45] Old English Text: Attenborough (ed.), *The Laws*, p. 98; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, no. 34, p. 416. 'B2' reads '...and all the people who are in East Anglia have agreed upon...': Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty', p. 49.
[46] Old English Text: Attenborough (ed.), *The Laws*, p. 98; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, no. 34, p. 416.

boundaries' in 'B2'.[47] Thus, Simon Keynes argues that 'B' seems to be the 'more "official" of the two versions, in the sense that it is closer to the issuing authority', whereas the use of the third person in 'B2' leads him to argue that this version appears to have been 'intended for or copied by a party other than those directly involved'.[48] Nevertheless, it would be unwise to read too much into this difference between the two versions: Paul Kershaw notes that 'there can be no certainty that these differences in grammar, style and content were present in "B2" when it was initially committed to writing, rather than at a later stage of what appears to have been a complex process of transmission'.[49] The second variation relates to the statement in 'B' that the boundary went '*up on Temese*' (translated by Whitelock as 'up the Thames'), which is rendered as '*andlang [Temese]*' ('along the Thames') in 'B2'.[50] Yet this discrepancy is likewise not significant here, since as far as this study is concerned the crucial part of the boundary statement is the clause relating to Watling Street, and, most importantly, what happened to the boundary once it reached the Roman road. The remainder of the document is concerned with the compensation for crimes and conduct of trade, as outlined above.

At first sight the boundary described in the 'peace' seems to have little bearing on the Staffordshire area since it is said to end at Watling Street's crossing of the River Ouse – i.e. at Stony Stratford, around 12 miles south of Northampton. Yet the document does not specify why the boundary ended there: indeed, there is no obvious explanation for Alfred and Guthrum's boundary ending at Stony Stratford (although, equally, there are no obvious reasons why it should not have done so). To complicate matters, however, it is sometimes thought that in the early eleventh century Watling

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[47] Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty', p. 49.
[48] Keynes, 'Royal Government', p. 234.
[49] Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty', p. 49.
[50] Dumville, 'The Treaty', p. 21.

Street marked the southern limits of Scandinavian jurisdiction in England, a fact which has encouraged scholars to believe that the Roman road may well have served a similar function in the late ninth.[51] Consequently, there appear to be two alternative explanations for the boundary statement ending at Watling Street: either, the Roman road's intersection with the Ouse marked the limits in general terms of those areas in which Alfred and Guthrum had a shared interest and was a sufficiently well-known location to make it a convenient boundary marker within the docuemnt; or, the information provided by the 'peace' is defective – i.e. in reality the boundary did not end at Stony Stratford, but for some reason its course was not fully recorded, either originally or during the process of copying. The consensus has been that the latter interpretation is the more likely to be true, and many scholars therefore argue that from Stony Stratford, Alfred and Guthrum's boundary continued north-westwards along Watling Street, eventually crossing the West Midlands.

There has been much disagreement, however, about how far along Watling Street the boundary is likely to have gone. Many reconstructions have it following the road all the way to Watling Street's terminus at Wroxeter, located around five miles south-west of Shrewsbury, as illustrated on Map 19.[52] The boundary would thus have cut across the area which came to be known as Staffordshire, as in the late eleventh century Watling Street dissected the shire, traversing the shire's eastern boundary around a mile south of Tamworth and crossing into Shropshire in the vicinity of Weston-under-Lizard. The approximate course of Watling Street across the shire is

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[51] For further discussion, below: p. 198-99. It is important, however, to remember that even if the road marked the limits of early eleventh-century Scandinavian jurisdiction in England *in some way*, it does not necessarily follow that it likewise did so over a century earlier.

[52] I.D. Margary, *Roman Roads in Britain* (London: John Baker, revised edn, 1967), p. 292. For examples of modern maps showing the boundary terminating in the vicinity of Wroxeter: D.H. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 45; Keynes, 'The Vikings', p. 65; John, 'The Age', p. 162. More recently, however, Simon Keynes has revised his view, stating only that the boundary ran along Watling Street 'towards Tamworth': Keynes, 'King Alfred', p. 33.

depicted on Map 20. Indeed, M.W. Greenslade and D.G. Stewart have argued that as a result of the 'peace' central and northern Staffordshire 'fell under Danish control'.[53]

Yet given that the 'peace' states that Alfred and Guthrum's boundary ran only '*oð Wætlingastræt*' ('to the Watling Street'), some scholars have been circumspect about what happened after it reached this point. Patrick Wormald, for instance, has argued that 'the boundary between English and Danish spheres of influence was fixed on the line of Watling Street, running from north of London up to Chester',[54] and Pauline Stafford suggests that 'the definition of Danish power' was marked by the Roman road 'almost as far north as Tamworth'.[55] The basis of these views is not clear, although Stafford's reconstruction would allow Tamworth to remain on the 'English' side of the border – a situation which, she argues, Æthelred and Æthelflæd were later determined to achieve.[56] Nevertheless, if Wormald and Stafford are correct, the Staffordshire area would have been on the borders of Guthrum's rule in the late ninth century, rather than directly under his control.

Frank Stenton, on the other hand, was unwilling to extend the boundary so far north. He interpreted the 'peace' in light of the later organisation of the Danelaw, which, he argued, implied that 'Guthrum's kingdom was bounded on the north by the upper courses of the Avon and the Welland' (i.e. incorporating all but the most northern section of Northamptonshire at its Domesday Book extent).[57] Yet it seems

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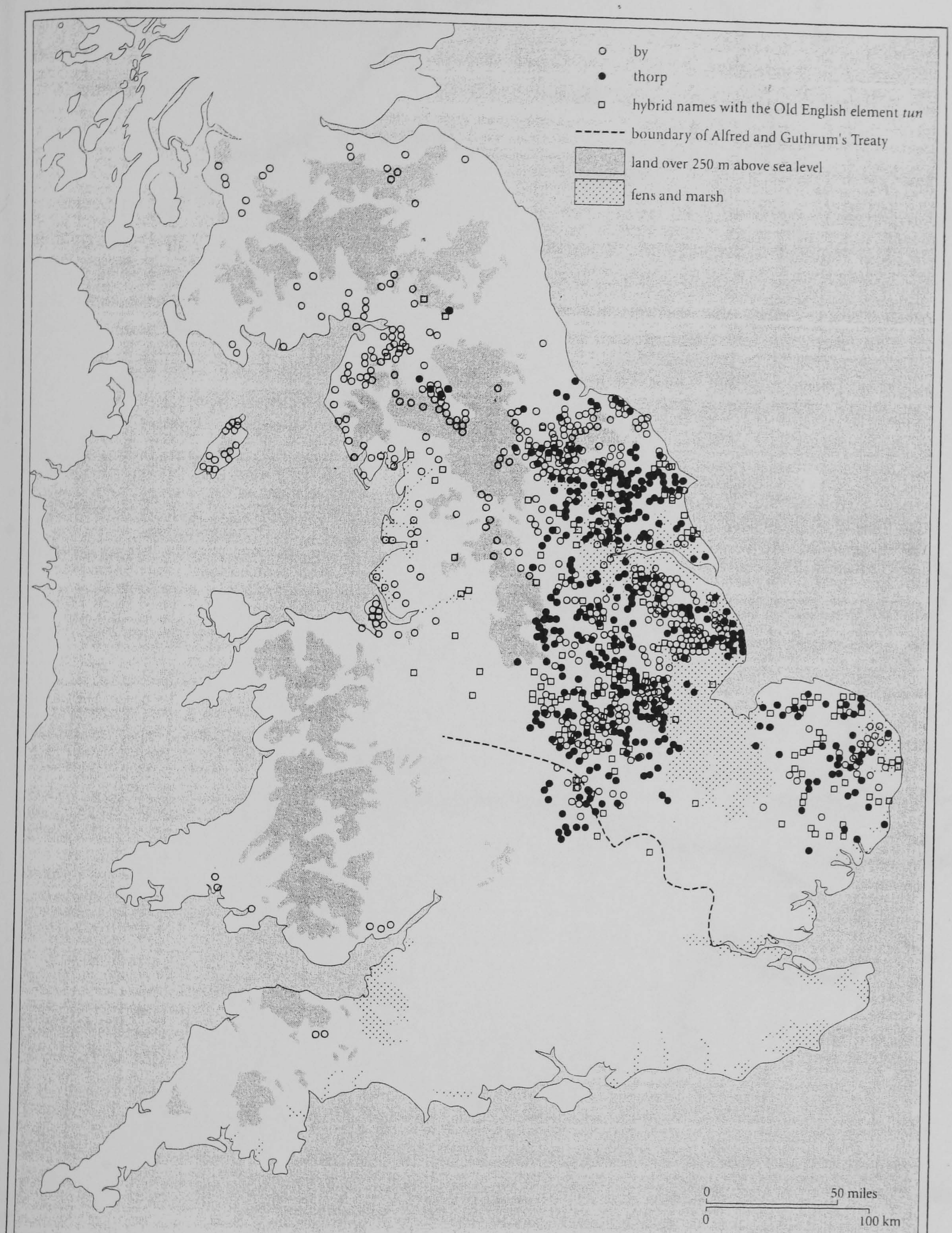
[53] M.W. Greenslade & D.G. Stewart, *A History of Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 3rd edn, 1998), p. 26.

[54] Wormald, 'The Ninth Century', p. 132. This view is echoed by Henry Loyn: H.R. Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1977), p. 59.

[55] P. Stafford, *The East Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985), pp. 111-12. A similar view is offered by Peter Sawyer, who argues that 'it seems probable that Watling Street marked the boundary for some 50 miles [from the intersection of Watling Street and the Ouse] although the treaty says nothing about such a continuation'. This would take the boundary as far north as Tamworth: P.H. Sawyer, *The Age of the Vikings* (London: Edward Arnold, 2nd edn, 1971), p. 151.

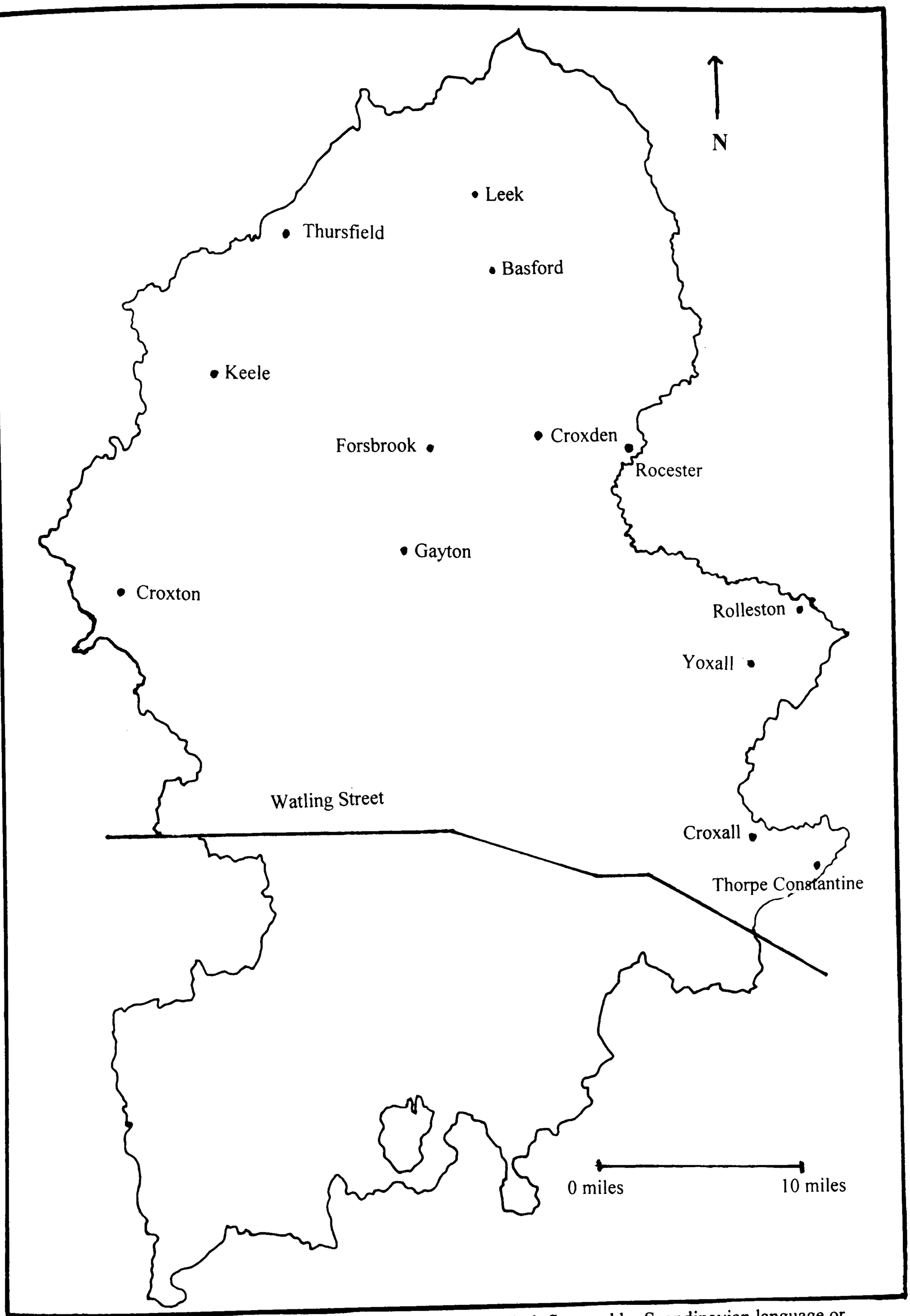
[56] Stafford, *The East Midlands*, pp. 136-37.

[57] F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1971), p. 261. David Dumville, however, has proposed a radically alternative reading of the 'peace', suggesting that at the



Map 19: A typical reconstruction of the boundary described in Alfred and Guthrum's 'peace'

Source: S. Keynes, 'The Vikings in England, *c.* 790-1016', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 65



Map 20: Major place-names in Staffordshire potentially influenced by Scandinavian language or personal names. The approximate course of Watling Street across the shire is shown

Adapted from R.J.P. Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

unwise to assume that there was a direct link between the boundary defined in the 'peace' (originally composed in the late ninth century) and the much later division of England into shires where 'Danish' as opposed to 'West Saxon' or 'Mercian' law is said to have prevailed – although a link is often made between the two.[58] Indeed, the term 'Danelaw' is used inconsistently by scholars, and can mean many different things in different contexts.[59] In reality, it is unknown when the 'Danelaw' first existed: the earliest surviving references to people being under 'Danish law' occur during the reign of Æthelred II (978-1016),[60] but it is not until at least 30 years after the end of his reign that we can be certain which shires were considered to be under 'Danish law', and not until the twelfth century that the term 'Danelaw' was more

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time when it was originally drawn up Guthrum controlled land to the south and west of its boundary (as opposed to the north and east, which was controlled by Alfred). Dumville argues that this reading would make sense were the 'peace' concluded in 878, since at this time 'the Danes controlled Mercia (and had indeed settled part of it in the preceding year), and therefore Middlesex, including London'. He goes on to say that since, in his view, in 878 the Scandinavians controlled land to the south-west of the border, 'if the boundary is to be dated to that year, then the West Saxons must have controlled territory to the northeast, namely Essex': Dumville, 'The Treaty', pp. 16-17. Yet his view rests on two assumptions: firstly, that London passed into, and remained under, Scandinavian control following Mercia's division in 877; and, secondly, that the 'peace' was concluded in 878 (whereas it could date from any time up to and including 890). Indeed, Dumville's interpretation has recently been rejected by a number of scholars, for example: J. Haslam, 'King Alfred and the Vikings: Strategies and Tactics 876-886 AD', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 13 (2006), pp. 123-24; Kershaw, 'The Alfred-Guthrum Treaty', p. 46; Keynes, 'King Alfred', p. 33. Yet even if Dumville's reading of the boundary statement is correct, in the context of *this* study, we would still need to decide whether or not to extend the boundary along Watling Street after the Roman road's intersection with the Ouse.

[58] M.W. Greenslade & D.G. Stewart, for example, say that as a result of the 'peace', 'Danish authority was more or less confined to the area north of Watling Street, which became known as the Danelaw': Greenslade & Stewart, *A History of Staffordshire*, p. 26.

[59] Lesley Abrams notes that 'used adjectivally, ['Danelaw'] can be a convenient shorthand for a location ("Danelaw counties"), or a date ("Danelaw treaties"), or both in one ("Danelaw sculpture"). The locations, however, vary significantly, as do the dates'. She goes on to say that 'much current use of the term "the Danelaw" disguises these difficulties, suggesting a single identifiable and distinctive geographical, social, legal, or political entity': Abrams, 'Edward', pp. 128-33; also: H.M. Chadwick, *Studies on Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), pp. 198-201; D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 2-5; *eadem*, *The Vikings*, pp. 32-33; K. Holman, 'Defining the Danelaw', in J. Graham-Campbell, R. Hall, J. Jesch & D.N. Parsons (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21-30 August 1997* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 1-11.

[60] For example: VI Æthelred; A.J. Robertson, *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), pp. 102-03.

commonly used.[61] But by the late eleventh century the western limits of the 'Danelaw' were marked, in part, by Watling Street, which formed a section of the boundary between Warwickshire and Leicestershire, the latter shire being considered to be under 'Danish law' at that time. Indeed, it is probable that this, along with a statement by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that in 1013 '*eall here be norðan Wæclinga stræte*' ('all the army north of Watling Street') submitted to Swein Forkbeard, has encouraged scholars to view the Roman road as likely to be an important dividing line between areas under Scandinavian and 'English' control in the late ninth century.[62]

The 'peace' undoubtedly, however, raises more questions than it answers, and without knowing more about the circumstances and date of its original composition, it would be unsafe to draw firm conclusions about the nature and extent of its boundary: how, if at all, did its boundary relate to the division of Mercia in 877? Did Alfred and Guthrum's frontier respect the boundary agreed in 877 (or did one division supersede the other)? To satisfactorily answer these questions we would need, as a minimum, to know more about Guthrum's status within those parts of Mercia under Scandinavian control after 877. That is to say, while the army with which he is associated 'shared out' some of Mercia, it does not automatically follow that Guthrum held authority in the Midlands when the frontier with Alfred was established.[63] Moreover, since the 'peace' explicitly connects Guthrum's rule with East Anglia, we should perhaps view the document in connection with that region alone.

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[61] The earliest surviving record of which shires belonged to the 'laws' of the West Saxons, Mercians and Danes is in a document which was dated to 1045x1109 by Liebermann: Holman, 'Defining the Danelaw', pp. 5 & 9, n. 7.

[62] ASC, MSS 'C', 'D', 'E' & 'F', 1013; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 97; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 245. Also: Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 58; Irvine (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. E*, p. 70; Baker (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. F*, p. 105.

[63] This is one occasion when it would be helpful to know when the document was originally composed since, arguably, it is safer to assume that Guthrum exerted authority in the Mercian kingdom immediately after 877 than at the time of his death in 890 (by which time 13 years had elapsed, and his authority there may have broken down). Lesley Abrams argues that we do not know 'whether Danish Mercia or Northumbria acknowledged [Guthrum's] authority': Abrams, 'Edward', p. 132.

As a consequence of these problems scholars have looked for contexts which might account for Alfred and Guthrum's boundary running north-west along Watling Street, into the Midlands, and which would also explain why this part of the boundary's course was excised in the extant versions of the 'peace'. One solution is that the (London-based?) copiers of the surviving manuscripts lost interest in recording the boundary's course once it had gone beyond their diocese, and therefore excised the end of the boundary clause.[64] An alternative explanation has been offered by Simon Keynes, which is connected to his recently-developed 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' model.[65] Using charter and numismatic evidence, along with narrative sources like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Asser's Life of King Alfred, Keynes has challenged the view that Wessex and Mercia were essentially separate polities until the early tenth century, and instead proposes the existence of a polity, *c.* 880-927, which he calls the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons', and which, he argues, was 'transitional between "Wessex" (with its south-eastern extensions) and "England"'.[66] The name 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' is derived from charters of the late 880s and 890s, in which Alfred is styled 'king of the Anglo-Saxons', a term likewise adopted by Asser.[67]

Keynes argues that the relationship between Wessex and Mercia grew increasingly close from the 850s onwards, although he notes that by this time Wessex was the stronger of the two kingdoms, a situation which arguably become more marked following the departure of Burgred from Mercia and the appointment of

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[64] Dumville, 'The Treaty', p. 22. Dumville, however, feels that we should take the possibility of truncation of the boundary clause's text seriously. 'But', he argues, 'without the discovery of further textual evidence, this notion can hardly be pursued': *ibid.*, p. 22, n. 109.

[65] For example: Keynes, 'King Alfred'; *idem*, 'England, 900-1016', in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History Volume III:* c. *900* – c.*1024* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 456-84 (at 460-66); *idem*, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', in Higham & Hill (eds), *Edward the Elder*, pp. 40-66.

[66] Keynes, 'King Alfred', p. 36.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 26, n. 115 & p. 36.

Ceolwulf II as king in 874. He suggests that, not long after Ceolwulf's reign ended (in unknown circumstances, probably around 879), it is conceivable that Alfred gained or assumed direct control over Mercia, a situation which ultimately resulted in Æthelred being obliged to acknowledge Alfred's overlordship.[68] But Keynes feels that Alfred's relationship with Æthelred soon went beyond mere overlordship. He notes that extant charters indicate that as Alfred's reign progressed he was styled 'king of the Anglo-Saxons' with increasing regularity, and proposes that for Alfred the term 'Anglo-Saxon' was used 'to signify the amalgamation of two political entities, namely the "Anglian" kingdom of Mercia (less the part already settled by the Danes) and the "Saxon" kingdom of Wessex and its eastern extensions'. This situation, he argues, is manifested in the charters of the 880s and 890s, in which 'Æthelred usually acted with permission of or in association with King Alfred, but occasionally acted independently of him'. Indeed, Keynes notes that Æthelred's powers do not appear to have extended to the minting of coins since no coins bearing his name survive (nevertheless, while this may well be evidence of Æthelred's inferior position in relation to Alfred, the extent to which the minting of coins is a pre-requisite for 'kingly status' is, of course, open to debate).[69]

Keynes also argues that, following Alfred's death, the so-called 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' passed on to Edward the Elder (899-924), since, amongst other

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[68] A Mercian regnal list which appears in BL Cotton Tib. A. xiii assigns Ceolwulf a reign of five years (i.e. between 874, when Guthrum's army is said to have over-wintered at Repton, and 879). Tiberius A. xiii, although commonly known as 'Hemming's Cartulary', in fact consists of two distinct manuscripts which were bound together, the latter of which alone can be associated with Hemming. Folios 1-118 were originally copied out in the first half of the eleventh century (possibly not much, if at all, after 1016), whereas folios 119-200 were copied out at Worcester in the last decade of the eleventh century: N.R. Ker, 'Hemming's Cartulary: A Description of the Two Worcester Cartularies in Cotton Tiberius A.XIII', in R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin & R.W. Southern (eds), *Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), pp. 51 & 69-72; also: H.P.R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1961), pp. 15-16. The regnal list belongs to the first (i.e. earlier) part of the collection [f. 114].

[69] Keynes, 'King Alfred', pp. 27-29. Keynes, however, notes that the message from the charters is 'far from clear': *ibid.*, p. 27.

things, extant charters likewise often style Edward as 'king of the Anglo-Saxons', and Edward was able to issue charters concerning the Oxford and London areas – i.e. in places which might be thought to have lain more naturally within 'Æthelred's territory'.[70] He states that 'not without good reason' is it often assumed that the boundary defined in the 'peace' 'would have continued along Watling Street (the A5) towards Tamworth', although without either explaining the basis of his view, or specifying how far 'towards Tamworth' he thinks the boundary is likely to have gone. Indeed, he connects the document to his model by noting that it casts Alfred as operating with the councillors of 'all the English', and therefore 'responsible, implicitly, for a kingdom extending north as well as south of the Thames, down to and including London'.[71]

Yet other interpretations of the relationship between the West Saxon dynasty and Æthelred and/or Æthelflæd are possible, and we shall see that the model does not offer sufficient grounds for arguing that from Stony Stratford Alfred and Guthrum's boundary is likely to have continued north-west along Watling Street. While there certainly appears to have been close co-operation between West Saxon and Mercian rulers in the later ninth and early tenth centuries – for instance, in the period when Edward the Elder and Æthelflæd conquered areas then under Scandinavian control – we have seen that Wessex and Mercia have nevertheless traditionally been viewed as being, effectively, separate kingdoms at that time. That is to say, although co-operation between the two kingdoms was possible and often now desirable, the West Saxon monarchy is often thought to have exerted overlordship over the Mercian rulers in a way similar to that in which the Mercians appear to have exerted overlordship for longer or shorter periods over every other Anglo-Saxon kingdom except Northumbria

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[70] *Idem*, 'Edward', p. 54; also: *idem*, 'King Alfred', pp. 37-38; *idem*, 'England', pp. 462-64.
[71] *Idem*, 'King Alfred', pp. 34 & 36.

between the late seventh century and the early ninth, in the period of the so-called 'supremacy of the Mercian kings'.[72]

It has traditionally been argued that it was not until Æthelflæd's death in 918 that the Mercian kingdom was increasingly brought under West Saxon control – a process which seems to have begun in earnest with the 'occupation' of Tamworth by Edward in that year.[73] Indeed, there are reasons to think that the Mercian rulers were more independent of Alfred and Edward than Keynes's model allows, not least because the Mercian Register gives the impression that during the second decade of the tenth century Æthelflæd was able to act independently of Edward, and often did. Furthermore, the fact that Edward is said to have '*gerad*' ('taken' or 'occupied') Tamworth after Æthelflæd's death, and that in 919 her daughter, Ælfwyn, was '*ælces anwealdes on Myrcum benumen*' ('deprived of all authority in Mercia'), and removed to Wessex, likewise suggests that some people still conceived of Mercia as an independent kingdom at that time – or at least resented Edward beginning to exert more direct control over them.[74]

There is also evidence that in the aftermath of Burgred's demise in 874 Ceolwulf was in a stronger position than the Chronicle's depiction of him as a 'foolish king's thegn' implies. He certainly had sufficient authority to mint coins: thirteen

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[72] F.M. Stenton, 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings', *English Historical Review*, 33 (1918), pp. 433-52 [reprinted in Stenton (ed.), *Preparatory*]. For a recent discussion of the 'supremacy of the Mercian kings': S.R. Bassett, 'Divide and Rule? The Military Infrastructure of Eighth- and Ninth-Century Mercia', *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), pp. 53-57.

[73] '*7 þa on þæm setle ðe he þær sæt þa gefor Æþelflæd his swystar æt Tameworþige .xii. nihtum ær middum sumera, 7 þa gerad he þa burg æt Tameworþige, 7 him cierde to eall se þeodscype on Myrcna lande þe Æþelflæde ær underþeoded wæs*' ('Then during the stay he made there [i.e. the stay Edward is said to have made at Stamford in 918, after he brought it under his control], his sister Æthelflæd died at Tamworth twelve days before midsummer. And then he occupied the [fortified place] of Tamworth, and all the nation in the land of the Mercians which had been subject to Æthelflæd submitted to him'): ASC, MS. 'A', 918; Old English text: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, pp. 68-69; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 216.

[74] ASC, MSS, 'B', 'C' & 'D', 919; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 217. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 41. '*Gerad*', from the verb '*ge-ridan*' is defined by Bosworth-Toller as 'to ride, reach or obtain by riding, get into one's power, subject': Bosworth & Toller (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 431.

coins attributed to Ceolwulf survive in which he is styled as 'king', the majority of which were minted at London, probably in the late 870s, something which indicates that London was probably not under Scandinavian control at this time.[75] Two charters in which Ceolwulf is styled as '*rex Merciorum*' ('king of the Mercians'), and both dated to 875, likewise survive.[76] But our sources give the impression that at some point after the end of Ceolwulf's reign the balance of power tipped heavily in Wessex's favour: the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's annal for 886 calls Æthelred an 'ealdorman', and in many surviving charters he is similarly styled '*dux*' (the standard Latin term for Old English *ealdorman*), although even Keynes concedes that his status was 'clearly quite different from that of other *duces*, for he is also accorded styles which aspire to divine grace and which appear to be on the verge of royal'.[77]

Nevertheless, our impression of the extent of Mercia's subordination to Wessex may well be unduly influenced by the heavy focus of surviving sources on the West Saxon kingdom, often at Mercia's expense. F.T. Wainwright, for example, argued that Æthelflæd's achievements in the second decade of the tenth century 'are pointedly ignored by the West Saxon version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' [i.e. Manuscript 'A'], which includes 'no word of her victories, no word of her share in the national programme of fortress-building, no word of her high reputation in the north, and no word of her loyal and successful co-operation with Edward'. The meagre

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[75] M.A.S. Blackburn, 'The London Mint in the Reign of Alfred', in Blackburn & Dumville (eds), *Kings, Currency and Alliances*, pp. 119-22; *idem* & S. Keynes, 'A Corpus of the *Cross-and-Lozenge* and Related Coinages of Alfred, Ceolwulf II and Archbishop Æthelred', in Blackburn & Dumville (eds), *Kings, Currency and Alliances*, pp. 125-50; also: Keynes, 'King Alfred', pp. 14-19.

[76] S 215 (BCS 540) and S 216 (BCS 541) respectively; Keynes, 'King Alfred', p. 12. A charter of Edward the Elder concerning land at Water Eaton (Oxfordshire) and dating from the early tenth century (dated 900 but with an indiction for 904), refers to an earlier grant by Ceolwulf, the landbook for which is said to have been lost: S 361 (BCS 607).

[77] Keynes, 'King Alfred', p. 29. In a charter dated 883, for example, granting privileges to Berkeley Minster in return for 12 hides at Stoke Bishop (Gloucestershire), Æthelred is styled '*ealdorman*' in the main body of the charter, and '*dux*' in the witness list, where he appears immediately after Alfred (who is styled as '*rex*'): S 218 (BCS 551). While Finberg views this charter as an authentic copy (surviving in the earlier part of the collection often known as Hemming's cartulary), Dumville argues that 'it remains to be seen whether the document is rightly dated or generally acceptable': Dumville, 'The Treaty', p. 7; Finberg, *West Midlands*, no. 83, pp. 49-50.

information regarding her career which does survive is mainly provided instead by the so-called Mercian Register.[78] Indeed, so pronounced is Manuscript 'A''s concentration on West Saxon affairs at this time, and so marked is the contrast between its relatively detailed account of Edward's role in the 'English' re-conquest of places under Scandinavian rule, that, coupled with the complete absence of any mention of Æthelflæd's part in that process, we should consider whether the Chronicle's wider lack of detail regarding Mercian matters in the later ninth and early tenth centuries can be explained by a West Saxon focus alone. It is conceivable that the role of the Mercians in the 'English' re-conquest of places under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the tenth century was actively downplayed in the Chronicle, in order, perhaps, to legitimise Edward's 'occupation' of Tamworth in 918, and the subsequent exertion of more direct West Saxon control over the Mercian kingdom.[79] Such an 'agenda' might well account, in part at least, for the Chronicle's depiction of the Mercian rulers as entirely subordinate to the West Saxon monarchy at this time – for instance in the annal for 910, when it is said that prior to the battle at

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[78] F.T. Wainwright, 'Æthelflæd Lady of the Mercians', in P. Clemoes (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickens* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), pp. 53-54. Æthelflæd's 'high reputation in the north' is a reference to the Mercian Register's statement that in 918 the '*Eforwicingas*' ('people of York') had promised Æthelflæd '*þæt hi on hyre rædenne beon woldon*' ('that they would be under her direction'): ASC, MSS 'B', 'C' & 'D', 918; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 216. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40. For further discussion of the West Saxon focus of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: S. Foot, 'Finding the Meaning of Form: Narrative in Annals and Chronicles', in N. Partner (ed.), *Writing Medieval History* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), pp. 99-102.

[79] This view, however, assumes that the Chronicle was meant to play an 'active' role in the exertion of more direct West Saxon control over the Mercian kingdom: i.e. that many of the Chronicle's later ninth- and early tenth-century annals were composed in the early tenth century in order to 'legitimise' West Saxon 'expansion'. In reality, however, we can only speculate on the purposes and intended audiences of the Chronicle's manuscripts. For an attempt to see the events of the second decade of the tenth century from a 'Mercian perspective': N. Cumberledge, 'Reading Between the Lines: the Place of Mercia within an Expanding Wessex', *Midland History*, 27 (2002), pp. 5-7.

Tettenhall/Wednesfield, Edward (as opposed to Æthelred or Æthelflæd) sent out a *fyrd* consisting of both West Saxons and Mercians.[80]

It is also important to remember that although the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle calls Æthelred an 'ealdorman',[81] other sources describe him as a 'king'. Æthelweard's Chronicle, for instance, calls Æthelred both '*dux*' and '*rex*'. This Chronicle is thought to be a later tenth-century Latin translation of a lost version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which appears to have been closely related to Manuscript 'A'.[82] It is usually attributed to the Æthelweard who was ealdorman of Wessex during the reign of Æthelred II, and who attested charters between 973 and 998 – an assumption which is viable in relation to his Chronicle's dedication to Matilda, abbess of Essen, who was born in 949, and who died as abbess in 1011.[83] The Chronicle's only known manuscript is British Library Cotton Otho A. x, copied out in the early eleventh century, which was almost wholly destroyed in the Cotton Library fire. Fortunately, however, in 1596 Henry Savile had printed an edition of the Chronicle which has been found to 'agree closely' with 18 surviving charred fragments of Cotton Otho A. x.[84]

Æthelweard records that in 886 '*dux Æðered*' was set up to guard London by Alfred, but in 893 he explicitly styles Æthelred 'king', stating that '*subsidium clitoni præbuit rex Eðered, Lundonia scilicet ab urbe profectus*' ('King Æthelred set out

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[80] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D', 910; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 64; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 47; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 73; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 37, Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 210.
[81] For example, in the annal for 886: above, p. 186, n. 20.
[82] Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, pp. xxiv-xxvi; A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 35-36 & 43; S. Keynes & M. Lapidge (eds), *Alfred the Great: Asser's "Life of King Alfred" and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), p. 189; L. Whitbread, 'Æthelweard and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *English Historical Review*, 74 (1959), p. 582. Campbell argues that Æthelweard's copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was a revision probably made in the reign of Edward the Elder: Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, pp. xxviii-xxxii; also: Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 35-36.
[83] Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, pp. xii & xv.
[84] *Ibid.*, pp. xi-xii.

from the city of London, and gave the prince [i.e. Edward the Elder] help [at Thorney]'). He also implies that Æthelred's authority was recognised in areas beyond Mercia, saying that '*barbari pactum rumpunt Eaduuardum regem aduersus, nec non contra Ætheredum, qui tum regebat Northhymbria partes, Myrciasque*' ('the barbarians broke the peace with King [Edward], and with Æthelred, who then ruled the Northumbrian and Mercian areas').[85] A charter dated 901, which fortunately survives in the original, and which concerns a grant of land to the church of Much Wenlock (Shropshire), likewise states that the grant was made by '*AÞERED Æ[ÞELFLED quoqu]e . . . monarchiam Merceorum tenentes*' ('Æthelred and also Æthelflæd . . . holding the monarchy of the Mercians').[86] It should, however, be noted that although Æthelred and Æthelflæd had sufficient authority to issue charters without reference to the West Saxon king,[87] the Much Wenlock charter is the only one in which they are styled in this way. Nor can this charter be shown to style Æthelred as *rex* and Æthelflæd as *regina*, and therefore seems to describe them in exalted terms rather than ascribing them directly royal titles. Indeed, in the majority of their extant charters they are accorded other, more or less ambiguous, titles: in one late ninth-century charter, for example, Æthelred is called '*dux et patricius gentis Merciorum*'

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[85] *Ibid*, pp. 46, 50 & 52. Simon Keynes, however, argues that since Æthelweard was writing 'for the intended benefit of his kinswoman in Germany, he might not have needed to worry whether [styling Æthelred '*rex*' in 893] would encourage any Mercian separatists among his readers'. He also states that 'it may be significant [that this] usage and its implications were not carried forward by Æthelweard into the early tenth century' (implying that he believes we should not read too much into Æthelweard styling Æthelred as 'king'): Keynes, 'Edward', p. 43.

[86] S 221 (BCS 587). For discussion of the charter's provenance: Finberg, *West Midlands*, no. 430, p. 148; P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Charters of Burton Abbey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 1 & 2; M.A. Stevenson & W.H. Duignan (eds), 'Anglo-Saxon Charters Relating to Shropshire', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 4th Series, 1 (1911), p. 4. Stevenson and Duignan, however, note that although the original is extant, it exists in a 'mutilated' state, with any gaps (for example '*Æ[ÞELFLED quoqu]e*') supplied conjecturally, and by comparison with other charters: *ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

[87] The other surviving charters which include no reference to Alfred or his son are: S 219 (BCS 552), concerning Himbleton (Worcestershire), dated 884; S 220 (BCS 557), concerning Walden (Hertfordshire), dated 888; S 221 (BCS 537), concerning Marlcliff, in Cleeve Prior (Worcstershire), and undated; S 223 (BCS 579), a grant to St Peter's, Worcester, of rights there, and undated; S 224 (BCS 583), concerning *Stantun*, erroneously dated 800; S 225 (BCS 632), concerning Farnborough (Warwickshire or Berkshire?), erroneously dated 878.

('lord and patrician of the Mercian people'), attesting below Alfred, who is called 'king'; and in another, dated 883, he is termed '*ealdorman*' and once again attested below King Alfred.[88] Yet in many respects this is not unusual: there was a tradition of lesser or minor kings being given less than kingly titles in charters which were 'ratified' by their overlords, and so it is arguably unsurprising that in the Much Wenlock charter Æthelred and Æthelflæd were ascribed more directly royal titles, since they were acting without reference to Edward.[89]

Consequently, although Keynes's model is undoubtedly well conceived, there is evidence which suggests that the relationship between the rulers of Wessex and Mercia in the later tenth and early eleventh centuries was, at the very least, more complex than his model implies, and perhaps that for much of that period Æthelred and Æthelflæd enjoyed the sole rule of the Mercians, albeit with reference to heavy West Saxon overlordship. Indeed, Keynes himself notes that 'the evidence is assuredly imperfect, difficult to handle, and capable of all manner of different interpretations'.[90] In the final analysis, however, the available evidence fits neither of the two models outlined above entirely neatly: if the Mercian rulers were subordinate to Wessex in the way that Keynes implies, then how do we account for the royal styles accorded to Æthelred and Æthelflæd in the late ninth century, or for

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[88] S 217 (BCS 547), dated 880 with an indiction for 887, and S 218 (BCS 551) respectively. Other titles include: '*dominus/domina*': S 219 (BCS 552), S 224 (BCS 583); '*dux*': S222 (BCS 537), S 223 (BCS 579). Æthelred and Æthelflæd are accorded similar titles in those charters of Alfred to which they bear witness.

[89] In the late seventh century, for example, the rulers of the Hwicce issued charters in their own right in which they were styled as 'king': for example, in a charter dated 676, the Hwiccean ruler Osric is styled as 'king', as is Oshere, in a charter dated 680: S 51 (BCS 43) and S 52 (BCS 51) respectively. Yet from the early seventh century onwards the Hwiccean rulers acted with the permission of their Mercian overlords when they issued charters, and were accorded more or less ambiguous titles: in a charter dated 706, the Hwiccean ruler Æthelweard is described as '*subregulus*' ('under-king'), and is said to act with the consent of the Mercian king Cenred; and in another, dated 770, Uhtred is described as '*regulus*' ('ruler') of the Hwicce, and acts with the '*licentia*' ('license') of Offa: S 54 (BCS 116) and S 59 (BCS 203) respectively. In an undated charter, probably of the later ninth century, Uhtred acts with the consent of Offa and is not accorded any title: S 63 (BCS 218). Finberg dates the charter to *c.* 770: Finberg, *West Midlands*, no. 29, p. 37.

[90] Keynes, 'King Alfred', p. 2.

Æthelflæd's apparent independence in the second decade of the tenth? Indeed, how do we explain Edward's 'occupation' of Tamworth, and the removal of Ælfwyn following Æthelflæd's death? Yet if Mercia were an independent kingdom (in the way in which the term is usually understood) into the early tenth century, then why are Æthelred and Æthelflæd so rarely called 'king' or 'queen' (or, even, 'under-king' or 'under-queen'), and why were coins apparently not issued in their names?[91] Thus, the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' model does not provide a sufficient context for arguing that Alfred and Guthrum's boundary is likely to have run north-west along Watling Street, eventually crossing the Staffordshire area. In any case, even if Alfred was recognised as king, as opposed to overlord, in Mercia when the 'peace' was drawn up, without knowing whether Guthrum's authority likewise extended beyond East Anglia we cannot say whether the two kings' *shared* interests, and so the boundary agreed between them, are likely to have encroached on the West Midlands.[92]

To sum up, although the boundary defined in Alfred and Guthrum's 'peace' is often thought to have either dissected the area which came to be known as Staffordshire there are no good reasons for extending the boundary north-west along Watling Street from its intersection with the River Ouse at Stony Stratford. Indeed,

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[91] Æthelflæd's position in relation to Wessex and Mercia is discussed by Pauline Stafford: P. Stafford, 'Political Woman in Mercia, Eighth to Early Tenth Centuries', in M.P. Brown & C.A. Farr (eds), *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 44-49.

[92] Taking Keynes's model as a starting point, Jeremy Haslam has proposed that the Scandinavian raiders of the 870s aimed to create a 'super-kingdom which they were in the active process of extending over Mercia, and in which they wished to forcibly include Wessex'. He postulates the existence of a boundary between Scandinavian 'territory around London to the east and the rest of Mercia to the west'. The boundary, he says, 'would not have been a defensive frontier, since the Scandinavian rulers effectively held Mercia to the west as well, but [can] be suggested as the delimitation of a particular area of administration', which ran north-west along Watling Street, before branching off to follow the eastern boundary of Staffordshire. This, Haslam argues, accounts for why the boundary defined in the 'peace' stops short at Stony Stratford: 'the Treaty would not be expected to have mentioned any such continuation if a pre-existing boundary beyond this point had been left unaltered by the new agreement': Haslam, 'King Alfred', pp. 127-28. Yet we know less about the context in which the 'peace' was drawn up than Haslam implies. Indeed, his reconstruction rests on two assumptions: firstly, that Guthrum's authority extended across the East Midlands when the 'peace' was originally drawn up; and, secondly, that the document was originally composed in the late 870s.

given that the 'peace' makes no mention of what, if anything, happened to its boundary after Stony Stratford, we are not entitled to assume that such an extension occurred. This is not to say that it cannot have done so: the boundary defined in the document could, for some unknown reason, have made use of the Roman road as far north as the Staffordshire area. Equally, however, the aims of the 'peace' may simply have been confined to the management of a frontier at a particular moment of time between Wessex and Scandinavian East Anglia.[93] But without knowing the extent of Guthrum's authority outside East Anglia, the stability of the boundary defined in the document, when it was originally drawn up, and, even, if the boundary was ever implemented, it would be unsafe to see the 'peace' as having profound implications for administrative arrangements in the Staffordshire area.[94]

6.4 The West Midlands, 877-918

Gaps in our knowledge make any discussion of Mercia's division in 877 similarly problematic. While narrative sources record that in 877 a Scandinavian army 'shared out some' of the Mercian kingdom, and gave 'some' to Ceolwulf, they do not specify where, on the ground, the division between Scandinavian and 'English' rule ran. It is not until the second decade of the tenth century that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle provides a sense, in general terms at least, of which parts of the Midlands were under Scandinavian rule. At this time Scandinavian authority was apparently focused on the East Midlands: in 917 the Chronicle records that Æthelflæd obtained Derby, and a year later she gained control of Leicester; we likewise hear that in 917 '*eal se here þe to Hamtune hierde norþ of Weolud* ('all the army which belonged to Northampton, as

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[93] As suggested by Lesley Abrams: Abrams, 'Edward', p. 132.

[94] R.H.C. Davis has argued that the boundary did not endure long (albeit from the perspective that from Stony Stratford it ran north-west along Watling Street): Davis, 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', pp. 803-06. Pauline Stafford also argues that Alfred and Guthrum's boundary was 'transient', for similar reasons: Stafford, *The East Midlands*, p. 136.

far north as the Welland') submitted to Edward. Yet while the Chronicle implies that these places had defined territories attached to them, for instance recording that Æthelflæd '*begeat þa burh mid eallum þam ðe þærto hyrde þe ys haten Deoraby*' ('obtained the [fortified place] which is called Derby, with all that belongs to it'), it does not tell us anything about the geographical limits of these dependent territories.[95]

Pauline Stafford has argued that at some point prior to 913 Æthelred and Æthelflæd 'established Watling Street as the boundary of English and Danish Mercia', but only so far as Mancetter (located around nine miles south-east of Tamworth), where 'the Danelaw boundary, as marked by the southern bounds of Leicestershire and Derbyshire, turns north'. Thus Tamworth and Lichfield remained 'in the tip of English Mercia, in Staffordshire', but, she argues, were now 'frontier towns, a vulnerable position which probably explains why Stafford and not the older and more important centre of Tamworth became the new shire town'.[96] Yet as Stafford implies, we do not know how the early tenth-century situation relates to the territorial division made in 877: had places under Scandinavian rule in the second decade of the tenth century been so since the 870s, or had they been 'captured' by Scandinavian armies at some unrecorded point in the intervening 40 years? How distinct were areas under 'English' rule from areas under Scandinavian control – i.e. should we envisage a well-defined boundary, perhaps set out in a similar document to Alfred and Guthrum's 'peace' and which was well-known to the rulers of both sides? Or was the situation less clear-cut, with the Midlands divided between areas which were, to a greater or lesser extent, under either 'English' or Scandinavian control, and

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[95] For Derby and Leicester: above, p. 188, nn. 27 & 28. For Northampton: ASC, MS. 'A', 917; Old English text: Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 68; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 215. Also: Chapter 5.5.

[96] Stafford, *The East Midlands*, pp. 136-37. Stafford also argues that since Tamworth was a 'border town', Æthelred and Æthelflæd 'shifted to Gloucester and the Severn Valley as their new political centre': *ibid.*, pp. 111-12.

which may even have been separated by areas of 'no man's land' in which neither rulers were able to exert their authority fully? The remainder of the chapter will explore what charter, place-name and archaeological evidence tells us about the limits of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands, and whether this rule is likely to have impinged on the Staffordshire area. It will also re-assess the picture created by surviving narrative sources so as to see if they shed any further light on the nature and extent of Scandinavian rule.

Charter evidence provides some clues about the geographical extent of 'English' rule in the Midlands in the later ninth and early tenth centuries by providing a series of specific places at which Mercian rulers felt they had sufficient authority to grant land and privileges at various points between 877 and 918 (and places which were therefore apparently not under Scandinavian rule at those times). For example, a charter dated 883, which survives as an eleventh-century copy in the earlier part of the so-called Hemming's cartulary, records that Æthelred granted privileges to Berkeley Minster in return for 12 hides at Stoke Bishop, and includes a statement that says '*Ic ÆÐELRED ealdorman in bryrden`d're Godes gefe ge þelegod 7 ge þlenced mid sume dæle Mercna rices*' ('I, Ealdorman Æthelred, by the inspiration of God's grace endowed and enriched with a portion of the realm of the Mercians').[97] This implies that when the charter was drawn up parts of the pre-877 Mercian kingdom were still considered to be under Scandinavian rule, and that the Mercians retained a sense of what the extent of their kingdom had been prior to that date. Unfortunately, however, the charter provides no explicit information about which parts of the Mercian kingdom were under Æthelred's control, although it does show that in 883 he appears to have been able to grant land in what became Gloucestershire.

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[97] S 218 (BCS 551). Translation based on: F.E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 53.

The other surviving grants of land made by Æthelred and/or Æthelflæd are likewise concentrated in the West Midlands. They are: a grant of six hides at Brightwell Baldwin and eight at Watlington (Oxfordshire), recorded in a charter which is dated 880, but which has an indiction for 887; a grant of five hides at Himbleton (Worcestershire) in a charter dated 884, which is said to have been made at *Hrisbyri*, often identified as Princes Risborough (Buckinghamshire) but which Margaret Gelling suggests should be identified as Risbury (Herefordshire); a grant of 15 hides at Walden (Hertfordshire) in 888; a grant of ten hides to the community of the church of Much Wenlock at Stanton Long (Shropshire) and three at Caughley (in the parish of Barrow, Shropshire) in exchange for three hides at Easthope and five at Patton (Shropshire) in a charter dated 901; a renewal of a grant made by King Burgred of ten hides at Marlcliff in Cleeve Prior (Worcestershire), which although undated, must have occurred prior to Æthelred's death in 911; and a grant of rights at Worcester at an unspecified date, although made in or before 899 since the document records that Æthelred and Æthelflæd were operating '*on Ælfredes cyninges ge*þ*itnesse*' ('with King Alfred's cognisance').[98] There are also two surviving records of Æthelflæd acting alone: firstly, granting two hides at *Stantun*, in a charter which is incorrectly dated 800; and, secondly, granting ten hides at *Fernbeorngen*, in a charter that carries the incorrect date of 878.[99]

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[98] Brightwell Baldwin and Watlington: S 217 (BCS 551); for discussion of the charter's date: Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 260, n. 2. Himbleton: S 219 (BCS 552); for discussion of the name '*Hrisbyri*', the second element of which, Gelling argues, points to Old English *burh* and thus is etymologically more suitable for Risbury than Princes Risborough, most early spellings of which point to Old English *beorg* ('hill'): C.R. Hart, *The Danelaw* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1992), p. 460, n. 19. Walden: S 220 (BCS 557). Stanton Long and Caughley: S 221 (BCS 587), which is the only surviving original charter concerning a grant made by Æthelred and/or Æthelflæd. Marlcliff: S 222 (BCS 537); Finberg felt that this charter embodied the substance of the original charter, but contained some spurious material, and Stenton argued that the charter 'cannot be genuine in its present form': Finberg, *West Midlands*, no. 270, p. 107; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 259, n. 2. Worcester: S 223 (BCS 579).

[99] *Stantun*: S 224 (BCS 583). *Fernbeorngen*: S 225 (BCS 632). Gelling feels that S 225 embodies the substance of the original charter, but contains some spurious material, doubtless not least its date of

The majority of Æthelred and Æthelflæd's charters therefore relate to places in the West Midlands, with the surviving grants being concentrated in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and (especially) Worcestershire – although they may have granted land as far south as Hertfordshire and Berkshire. This indicates that the Mercian rulers' authority was strongest in the West Midlands, with Scandinavian rule therefore probably focused to the east, and, perhaps, north-east, as narrative sources imply was the case in the second decade of the tenth century. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the majority of Æthelred and Æthelflæd's charters survive in Worcester archives, such as 'Hemming's cartulary': it is therefore not all that surprising that so many relate to Worcestershire, with the charter evidence perhaps therefore saying as much about the location of archives as it does about the geographical limits of Æthelred and Æthelflæd's authority in the period 877-918.[100] Thus, the fact that none of their charters relate to the area which came to be known as Staffordshire may not be significant, and does not show that the area was under Scandinavian rule during this period. Indeed, it is sometimes argued that Æthelflæd's charter concerning *Stantun* shows that Æthelflæd was able to grant land *east* of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary with Derbyshire. *Stantun* has been identified either as Stanton by Newhall, located around two miles south-east of Burton-upon-Trent, i.e. just east of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary, or else is

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878: M. Gelling, *The Early Charters of the Thames Valley* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), no. 32, p. 31. *Fernbeorngen* is conventionally identified as Farnborough in Berkshire. If this identification is correct it would show that Æthelflæd was able to act grant land well outside the Mercian heartland, and without reference to Edward the Elder, who is not named in the charter: *ibid.* Susan Kelly notes that by 1066 Abingdon Abbey, in whose archive the charter survives, had interests in two places called Farnborough, one in Berkshire, and the other in Warwickshire. Kelly argues that 'it would be most satisfactory to identify the Farnborough of [S 225] with the Warwickshire manor', since 'its Berkshire namesake would surely have been located in West Saxon territory in Æthelflæd's day'. But, argues Kelly, 'the place-name evidence appears to rule this out. The form here is plural, which is usual for the Berkshire place, whereas the forms for the Warwickshire Farnborough are invariably singular': S.E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey Part I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), no. 20, pp. 87-88.

[100] As suggested to me by Nicholas Brooks, pers. comm., 1 May, 2007.

equated with an area much further north and east, as it is sometimes identified as Stanton in the Peak (Derbyshire), situated around three miles south-east of Bakewell. Unfortunately, however, both the date of this grant and the location of *Stantun* are contentious issues.

The charter, which survives as a thirteenth-century copy, is generally viewed as authentic.[101] Nevertheless, it has a very unusual dating clause, which reads '*dccc luna indictione uero iij*^{a}'.[102] Æthelflæd was clearly not able to grant land in 800, and so the simplest solution to the problem, as originally proposed by Birch, would be that the scribe intended to write *dcccc* (i.e. 900 – a date which would also agree with the charter's indiction). This view has found support from Cyril Hart, who notes that such a date is compatible with the witness list. He also points out that the 'Three Fragments', an Irish source compiled at an unknown date, record that Æthelred's ill-health had prevented his active involvement in government by 902, and suggests that the charter may indicate that 'Æthelflæd had taken over effective control of Mercia as early as 900'. Hart proposes either that the original charter had a fuller date, which gave the age of the moon, or, in his view 'more likely', that 'the copyist was unable to decipher fully what was written after the third "C" of the date in his exemplar, and wrote the word *luna* to fill the gap'.[103]

Alternatively, Peter Sawyer argues that it is unlikely that Æthelflæd would have been acting alone as early as 900. He notes that in spite of what is said by the 'Three Fragments', the aforementioned charter concerning Much Wenlock shows that Æthelflæd was operating jointly with her husband in 901. She was also joint

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[101] C.R. Hart, *The Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), no. 100, p. 102; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 1, p. 1.
[102] *Ibid.*
[103] Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 100, pp. 102-03. For further discussion of what Irish sources have to say about Æthelred and Æthelflæd: Wainwright, 'Æthelflæd', pp. 55-56; for further discussion of the 'Three Fragments': *idem*, 'Ingimund's Invasion', *English Historical Review*, 63 (1948), pp. 145-69.

beneficiary with Æthelred of a lease by Bishop Wærferth of Worcester, dated 904. Sawyer therefore proposes that the original dating clause may have read *dccccxiiii* (914) – a date that is compatible with the third indiction, which started in September 914. Sawyer suggests that '*luna*' may thus have been inserted by the copyist because 'one *c* was dropped and the other four minims were misread as *un*' (but he notes that the confusion of *x* with *l* is 'less plausible'). Indeed, Sawyer says that we would have additional reasons for dating the grant to sometime after 900 if *Stantun* is correctly identified as Stanton by Newhall, and if the Mercians did not control that part of the Trent Valley in 900. He notes that Æthelflæd is said to have provided Stafford and Tamworth with defences in 913 (i.e. immediately prior to Æthelflæd's grant at *Stantun*, were it to have been made in 914), and notes that she conquered Derby in 917. Consequently, he argues, this grant could be viewed as part of the re-conquest of places then under Scandinavian control, perhaps showing one of the ways 'English' rulers extended their authority at this time, with Sawyer therefore implying that Æthelflæd may have been unable to build defences in southern and central Staffordshire prior to 913. This issue will be addressed in more detail below, where it will be seen that the political context in which Stafford and Tamworth were provided with defences is far from clear.[104]

The location of *Stantun* is similarly controversial. The extant charter includes no boundary clause, but Sawyer identifies *Stantun* as Stanton by Newhall, near Burton, arguing that the early tenth-century political situation makes this Stanton more likely than the others in Derbyshire: i.e. implying that in his view Æthelflæd is unlikely to have been able to grant land further east (and north?) of Burton prior to

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[104] Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 1, pp. 1-2. For Bishop Wærferth's lease: S 1280 (BCS 608). Hart has more recently rejected Sawyer's suggested date on the basis that the charter 'requires a whole range of unlikely suppositions to fit it into the later date': Hart, *The Danelaw*, p. 570, n. 4.

913.[105] He connects Æthelflæd's *Stantun* to a place also called *Stantun* mentioned in a charter of King Edgar dated 968, which was assessed at two hides at that time. He suggests that Edgar's *Stantun* was likewise Stanton by Newhall on the basis that Burton Abbey, of whose archive both these charters formed part, later held a carucate there as part of its holding at Stapenhill (Derbyshire), situated approximately two miles to the north-west. Edgar's charter also has a boundary clause attached, and although Sawyer notes that none of its boundary points 'can be positively identified', he nevertheless also feels that 'the modern parish of Stanton and Newhall agrees very well with the boundary in the charter'.[106]

Hart similarly argues that Æthelflæd's and Edgar's charters relate to the same manor, but, contrary to Sawyer, feels that this manor is Stanton in the Peak. He argues that although none of the place-names which appear in the boundary clause have survived into the modern day, the bounds of the charter 'fit those of the combined modern parishes of Stanton and Birchover' in the same way 'as a hand fits a glove'. He feels that his case is supported by the fact that Stanton in the Peak and its berewick of Birchover carried a tax assessment of one hide apiece in 1066, arguing that this probably is the same land-unit as the one granted by Æthelflæd (assessed at two hides) and then by King Edgar's (also assessed at two hides).[107] Yet in the absence of a boundary clause for Æthelflæd's charter it is very easy to get drawn into circular arguments regarding the identification of this manor, especially considering that *Stantun* is a relatively common name in the North and East Midlands, with Domesday Book including eleven different entries for places called *Stantun(e)/Stantone* across

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[105] Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 1, p. 2. The next most south-westerly Stanton is Stanton by Bridge [SK 365 275], located around four miles east of Repton.
[106] *Ibid.*, no. 23, p. 39. For Edgar's charter of 968: S 768 (BCS 1211).
[107] Hart, *The Early Charters*, no. 108, pp. 108 & 185-86. For Stanton in the Peak and Birchover: Domesday Book [hereafter DB], f. 275; P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Derbyshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978), 6,73.

Derbyshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire.[108] Unfortunately, then, the location and date of Æthelflæd's grant at *Stantun* are too controversial for the charter to be useful here, and the document therefore cannot be used reliably to show that Æthelflæd was able to grant land east of the area which came to be known as Staffordshire at a particular moment during the first two decades of the tenth century.

Narrative sources also provide further, if admittedly obscure, information about the post-877 situation in the Midlands. For example, Æthelweard's Chronicle records that in 894

> '*adit in hostes Euoraca urbe, qui non parua territoria pandunt in Myrciorum regno loci in parte occidentali Stanforda. Hoc est inter fluenta amnis Vueolod et condensa syluæ, quæ uulgo Ceostefne nuncupatur*' ('in the city of York he [i.e. the West Saxon ealdorman Æthelnoth] contacted the enemy, who possessed large territories in the kingdom of the Mercians, on the western side of the place called Stamford. This is to say, between the streams of the river Welland and the thickets of the wood called Kesteven by the common people').[109]

This may imply that parts of the East Midlands were under Scandinavian rule in the 890s. Yet the full significance of this annal, and especially of the word '*pandunt*', is obscured by Æthelweard's often ambiguous Latin prose (and since Æthelweard's account of the years 893 to 899 seems to be independent of the corresponding annals in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, we cannot use the latter source to clarify the situation). Campbell's translation of this annal implies that Æthelnoth met 'the enemy' west of Stamford, which, implicitly, seems to have been part of the 'large' Scandinavian-held territories within the Mercian kingdom. This would correspond neatly to the political

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[108] Derbyshire: DB, ff. 274-75 & 277-78; Morgan (ed.), *DB: Derbyshire*, 6,21, 6,73, 13,1 & 17,22 (& 17,23). Shropshire: DB, ff. 254, 256, 258 & 260; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Shropshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986), 4,1,35, 4,3,3, 4,8,6, 4,21,5-6 & 7,4. Staffordshire: DB, f. 246; A. Hawkins & A. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976), 1,49.

[109] Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, p. 51.

situation of 918, when Edward seems to have gone to Scandinavian-controlled Stamford with his *fyrd*, and ordered defences to be built there.[110] Simon Keynes and Michael Lapidge, however, argue that Æthelweard's use of *pandunt* is 'nonsense' and that Campbell's suggested translation of '"possessed", literally "opened out"', is impossible since *pando* is intransitive and therefore cannot govern the accusative *territoria*. Instead, they propose that this section of text should be translated as 'at the city of York he [Æthelnoth] comes upon the enemy who are plundering no small territories in the kingdom of the Mercians to the west of Stamford'.[111] Such a translation, however, renders Æthelweard's intended meaning even more difficult to discern, since in this case it is unclear in what sense Æthelweard considered territories west of Stamford to be part of the Mercian kingdom in 894: i.e. it is unclear whether he meant that the Stamford area was firmly under Æthelred's control at that time (meaning that Æthelred's rule extended a considerable distance east of the Staffordshire area), or whether he intended '*Myrciorum regno*' to be understood as shorthand for 'the Mercian kingdom at its pre-877 extent' (with Æthelweard therefore supplying no information about the area's under Scandinavian control in the 890s).

More useful is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's account of the second decade of the tenth century. We saw in the previous chapter that Æthelflæd built defences at

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[110] The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in 918 '*Eadweard cing mid fired to Steanforda het gewyrcan ða burg on suðhealfe*' ('King Edward went to Stamfordwith his *fyrd* and ordered fortifications to be built on the south side of the river'), whereupon the people who belonged to the northern fortified place at Stamford '*hierde him beah to*' ('submitted to him'): ASC, 918; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 67; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 216. That Stamford was under Scandinavian control prior to Edward's arrival is made explicit by John of Worcester, who records that '*rex inuictissimus Eadwardus Senior, post Rogationes cum exercitu Stanfordam profectus est, firmamque in australi plaga amnis Welund arcem muniuit, et non solum Danos qui in septentrionali plaga eiusdem amnis arcem tenebant, sed et omnes qui ad illam pertinebant, in deditionem accepit*' ('the most invincible King Edward the Elder set out with his army after Rogationtide for Stamford, and fortified the strong fortress on the south bank of the River Welland, and received the submission not only of the Danes who held a fortress on the north bank of the same river, but also those who belonged to it'): R.R. Darlington & P. McGurk (eds), *The Chronicle of John of Worcester Volume II: the Annals from 450 to 1066* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 378-79.

[111] Keynes & Lapidge (eds), *Alfred the Great*, pp. 190, & 337, n.36. For further discussion of Æthelweard's style: Campbell (ed.), *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii; M. Winterbottom, 'The Style of Æthelweard', *Medium Ævum*, 36 (1967), pp. 109-18.

Brycg (probably Quatford) in 912, and at Tamworth and Stafford in 913, and the Mercian Register's record of her actions could have important implications for our understanding of the limits of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands at that time, especially in relation to the Staffordshire area.[112] Defences were built at many other places throughout England in the second decade of the tenth century, by Æthelflæd in Western Mercia, and by Edward the Elder throughout the East and South East Midlands. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle sometimes explicitly links Edward's victories against Scandinavian armies with the provision of these fortifications: that is to say, it creates the impression that when Edward conquered administrative centres in the East and South East Midlands then under Scandinavian rule, immediately afterwards he provided them with defences, presumably in order to secure his authority. In 915, for example, the Chronicle records that Edward went with his *fyrd* to Bedford, and '*beget þa burg, 7 him cirdon to mæst ealle þa burgware þe hie ær budon; 7 he sæt þær feower wucan 7 het atimbran þa burg on suphealfe þære eas ær he þonan fore*' ('obtained the [fortified place]; and almost all the citizens, who dwelt there before, submitted to him. And he stayed there four weeks, and before he went away ordered the [fortified place] on the south side of the river to be built').[113] Something similar seems to have occurred at Stamford in 918, where the Chronicle records that Edward went with his *fyrd* and ordered fortifications to be built on the south side of the river. Having done so, the people belonging to the fortified place north of the river are said to have submitted to him.[114] It is usually thought that the same was true of other places in the East and South East Midlands during the same period, such as

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[112] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 912-913; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, pp. 49-50; O'Brien O'Keeffe, *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 75. MS. 'D' also records that Æthelflæd built defences at Stafford and Tamworth under 913: Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 38.

[113] ASC, MS. 'A', 915; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 66; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 213.

[114] Although the Chronicle does not specify that Stamford was under Scandinavian rule at this time, John of Worcester records that the Danes who held a 'fortress' there submitted to Edward in 918: above, p. 219, n. 110.

Buckingham, where Edward is said to have gone with his army in 914 and built fortifications (usually taken to be a veiled reference to his obtaining Buckingham, even though the Chronicle does not specify this).[115]

The possibility that something similar happened at *Brycg* in 912, or at Tamworth and Stafford in 913, has rarely been explored by scholars. Indeed, it is often assumed that when Æthelflæd provided these three places with defences she was doing so in territory that was already under her control, albeit perhaps barely so in the case of Tamworth. This assumption is probably based on three factors. Firstly, at this time Æthelflæd was operating in areas which were, or at least once had been, part of the Mercian kingdom, whereas Edward was doing so outside of the 'historic' kingdom of Wessex. Secondly, Æthelred's actions at *Brycg*, Tamworth and Stafford were part of a much larger, kingdom-wide, programme of building or renewing defences, with some of these fortifications built in areas where there is no reason to suspect Scandinavian rule.[116] And, thirdly, unlike many of the places at which Edward is said to have built defences, *Brycg*, Tamworth and Stafford were not part of the later Danelaw. Yet given the lack of clear information regarding the status of the Staffordshire area prior to this point, we have to face the possibility that Æthelflæd's defences were built in order to bolster her position in recently acquired territory, and therefore that she was *unable* to provide *Brycg*, Tamworth or Stafford with defences before 912/13 – either because at least part of the area which came to be known as Staffordshire was under Scandinavian rule before this time, or because it was in a

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[115] ASC, MSS 'A', 'B', 'C' & 'D', 914; Bately (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. A*, p. 66; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 49; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 74; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 40; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212. R.H.C. Davis, for instance, argues that Buckingham had 'fallen to the Danes by 914', presumably on the basis of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's annal for that year: Davis, 'Alfred and Guthrum's Frontier', p. 804.

[116] Æthelred and Æthelflæd (and subsequently Æthelflæd alone after her husband's death in 911), built defences at Worcester, *Brycg* (probably Quatford), Tamworth, Stafford, Eddisbury, Warwick, Chirbury, Runcorn and at the currently unidentified *Bremesbyrig*, *Scergeat* and *Weardbyrig*. There is circumstantial evidence that defences were also built at Chester, Gloucester, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Winchcombe in the same period: Chapter 5.2, pp. 138-39.

'liminal' position, sandwiched between 'English' and Scandinavian rule (with neither side able to exert their authority over it fully).

Indeed, there are similarities between the Chronicle's account of Æthelflæd building defences at Tamworth and its record of Edward fortifying places in the East Midlands. For example, the Chronicle records that in 913 '*her Gode forgyfendum for Æþelflæd Myrcna hlæfdige mid eallum Myrcum to Tamaweorðige 7 þa burh þær getimbrede*' ('by the grace of God, Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians, went with all the Mercians and built the [fortified place] there'). It is not immediately clear whom the Chronicle has in mind when it says that 'all the Mercians' went to Tamworth, although this could, amongst other things, be a reference to an army sent to capture Tamworth, similar to the *fyrd*s which are said to have accompanied Edward to Bedford, Buckingham and Stamford.[117] Furthermore, the phrase '*Gode forgyfendum*', could likewise be instructive, since if Whitelock's translation ('by the grace of God') accurately conveys its intended sense, it implies that Æthelflæd went to Tamworth in difficult circumstances, either because she was crossing into Scandinavian-controlled territory, or because Scandinavian armies were active in the area. Indeed, similar phrases are employed by the Chronicle in relation to the 'capture' of Derby and Leicester, with the Chronicle recording that Æthelflæd obtained Derby '*Gode fultumugendum*' ('with the help of God') and Leicester '*mid Godes fultume*' ('with God's help').[118]

It is possible that having secured Tamworth Æthelflæd was able to turn her attention further north, whereupon she provided Stafford with defences later in 913,

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[117] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 913; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 75; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50.

[118] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 917 & 918; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, pp. 214 & 216. Also: Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B*, p. 50.

before moving on to places like Runcorn, which she fortified in 915. Yet it is important not to read too much into this possibility since, unlike at Derby and Leicester, we are not explicitly told that Æthelflæd 'obtained' either Stafford or Tamworth (and the same is true of the annal relating to the defences built at *Brycg*, which also makes no mention at all of Æthelflæd going there with 'all the Mercians', or with help from God). Indeed, the reference to God's grace in the annal for 913 may simply be a formulaic phrase, similar to statements in charters that kings held their position 'through the grace of God', and which was not intended to imply that Æthelflæd reached Tamworth in difficult circumstances. Bosworth-Toller suggests that *for-gifan* can be translated in numerous ways (for example: to give, grant, supply, permit, give up, leave off), some of which, if adopted, would imply a different context for Æthelflæd's journey to Tamworth (although Michael Swanton, in his recent edition of the Chronicle has suggested that the annal should be translated as 'here, God helping, Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, went with all the Mercians to Tamworth').[119] Moreover, even if Tamworth was under Scandinavian control prior to Æthelflæd's actions in 913, it does not necessarily mean that this situation was long-standing, and it certainly does not automatically follow that it had been so since 877: Æthelflæd could have gone to Tamworth in response to recent Scandinavian aggression in that area, and, once there, felt that it was a suitable time to provide both it and Stafford with defences. Yet whichever way one reads into the Chronicle's account of Æthelflæd's actions in 913, it provides a tantalising glimpse of the

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[119] Bosworth & Toller (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 310; also, Bosworth & Toller (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement*, p. 243, which translates '*for-gifend*' as 'one who grants'; Swanton, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, p. 96.

complexities which lie behind the meagre information provided by our surviving sources.[120]

That is as much as our written sources reveal about whether the Staffordshire area fell under direct Scandinavian rule during the later ninth and early tenth centuries. While other types of evidence, such as place-names and archaeology, are available, they shed little further light on this issue.

There are very few place-names in the Staffordshire area that are influenced by Scandinavian language or personal names, especially compared to shires further east. Yet this fact need not, in itself, be especially significant in relation to this study, since there is no reason to suppose that speakers of Old Norse were confined to areas subject to Scandinavian political authority in the later ninth and early tenth centuries. Consequently, no direct link can be made between Scandinavian-influenced place-names and Scandinavian rule: i.e. Scandinavian-influenced place-names need not be indicative of Scandinavian rule in the later ninth and early tenth centuries (and, conversely, their absence need not indicate an absence of Scandinavian control at that time).[121] Indeed, Scandinavian-influenced place-names are direct evidence only of the relative impact of Scandinavian language and personal names on naming-habits in a given area. That is to say, while place-name evidence shows that Scandinavian language had less influence in names coined by 1086 in the Staffordshire area than

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[120] The situation may be further complicated by the recent discovery of a coin carrying the mint name '*RORIVA CASTR*', which was perhaps minted in the 920s at Rocester (in North-East Staffordshire in the late eleventh century, adjacent to the shire's boundary with Derbyshire). Gareth Williams feels that this coin is an Anglo-Scandinavian issue, linked to the St Peter coinage of York, and also the coinage of Sihtric I, in both cases issued in the 920s. Williams argues that the authority of a Scandinavian polity based on York did have some impact south of the Humber at this time, and that the coin is likely to have been produced either in Yorkshire or the North Midlands. On this basis he suggests that Rocester is the best fit for the place-name, and a plausible location for a 'Viking base' (with a handful of place-names in the area perhaps containing Scandinavian elements): Gareth Williams, pers. comm., 3 May, 2007.

[121] Moreover, names which incorporate Scandinavian words may not have been coined by people for whom Old Norse was their first language since many Old Norse words were adopted into English.

was the case further east (for example in Derbyshire, and especially in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire), it does not automatically follow that the Staffordshire area was outside of direct Scandinavian rule in the later ninth and early tenth centuries.[122] For these, and other, reasons there has been considerable debate over whether Scandinavian-influenced names are indicative of settlement by Scandinavian people, although this debate lies beyond the scope of this chapter.[123]

There are just 13 major names (i.e. names belonging either to Domesday manors or to late medieval ecclesiastical parishes) in late eleventh-century Staffordshire which may have been influenced by Scandinavian language or personal names. They are: Basford, Croxall, Croxden, Croxton, Forsbrook, Gayton, Keele, Leek, Rocester, Rolleston, Thorpe Constantine, Thursfield and Yoxall.[124] Ten may be hybrid names, meaning that they were formed from a Scandinavian personal name combined with an Old English element, while the rest are simplex names. All of the names are in the northern half of the shire, or situated close to its eastern boundary, and are shown on Map 20.

None of the 13 names are certainly derived from a Scandinavian word or personal name (although Scandinavian influence is more certain in some names than

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[122] For further discussion of the uses and limits of place-name evidence: L. Abrams & D.N. Parsons, 'Place-Names and the History of Scandinavian Settlement in England', in J. Hines, A. Lane & M. Redknap (eds), *Land, Sea and Home: Proceedings if a Conference on Viking-period Settlement at Cardiff, July 2001* (Leeds: Maney, 2004), pp. 392-94; D.M. Hadley, 'In Search of the Vikings: the Problems and Possibilities of Interdisciplinary Approaches', in Graham-Campbell, Hall, Jesch & Parsons (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw*, pp. 13-15; *eadem*, *The Vikings*, pp. 2-7 & 92-104; Keynes, 'The Vikings', pp. 64-66; F.T. Wainwright, *Archaeology and Place-Names and History: An Essay on Problems of Co-Ordination* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 4, 9-11, 38-43 & 52-53.

[123] For an overview of this debate: Abrams & Parsons, 'Place-Names', pp. 379-92. Also: Hadley, *The Vikings*, pp. 99-104.

[124] For suggestions as to the derivations of these names: E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 4th edn, 1960), pp. 133, 184, 269, 292, 294, 389 & 585; M. Gelling 'Some Thoughts on Staffordshire Place-Names', *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, 21 (1981), pp. 5-6; D. Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood: David Horovitz, 2005), pp. 104, 217-18, 262, 273, 338, 357, 462-63, 535, 537 & 598; V. Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names: Based on the Collections of the English Place-Name Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 40, 172-73, 237, 248, 337, 367, 503, 506, 612 & 712.

in others). The origins of Leek's name, for example, have proved very difficult to unravel. Leek is situated in North-East Staffordshire, around six miles south of the shire's boundary with Cheshire. It is thought that its name is derived from either Old Norse *lækr* ('brook') or the unrecorded Old English **lece* (possibly also meaning 'brook' or, perhaps, 'to drip, to leak, to dribble').[125] Margaret Gelling has argued that Old Norse *lækr* is the most likely derivation, on the basis that many places 'with Norse names were in fact new foundations, and the rather bleak situation of Leek seems appropriate to a comparatively late origin', a view which assumes that the land-unit to which Leek's name applied did not once have another, English, name which was supplanted by an Old Norse one. David Horovitz, on the other hand, argues that it 'seems likely' that the root of this name is **lece*, a name, he suggests, perhaps coined 'with reference to the spring itself', citing the modern English words 'leak' and 'leach' (used in the sense of 'to cause liquid to percolate through some material').[126]

The situation is similar at Basford, located around three miles south-east of Leek, which David Horovitz describes as a 'puzzling name'. Here, the second element is derived from Old English *ford* ('ford'), and the first from a personal name which could be either Old English *Beorcol* or Old Norse *Börkr* or *Barkr*.[127] But however uncertain some of the derivation may be, it seems unlikely that *none* of the 13 names in question incorporate Scandinavian elements.

More important, however, is the question of when these names came into being. The earliest recorded instance of a particular place-name often dates from long after that name was coined, meaning that it is usually impossible to tell when a name

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[125] Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, p. 292; Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 357; Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 367.
[126] Gelling, 'Some Thoughts', pp. 5-6; *eadam* & A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000), p. 21; Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire*, p. 357.
[127] *Ibid.*, p. 104. The recent *Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names*, however, opts for the Old English personal name *Beorcal* and Old English *ford*: Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 40.

was first attached to the land-unit in question. Indeed, Croxall, situated near to Lichfield in south-east Staffordshire, is the *only* Scandinavian influenced place-name in the shire which occurs in a source which pre-dates Domesday Book, being recorded in a charter of the mid tenth century (which, however, survives only as a fourteenth-century copy).[128] Therefore, the overwhelming majority of Staffordshire's Scandinavian-influenced place-names could, conceivably, have been coined at any time between the late ninth century and 1086, for instance in the aftermath of the Scandinavian raids which occurred during the reign of Æthelred II. As a consequence, place-name evidence sheds little light on whether the Staffordshire area was brought under direct Scandinavian rule in the later ninth and early tenth centuries: i.e., irrespective of other considerations, in the context of this chapter's aims any significance Staffordshire's Scandinavian-influenced place-names may have depends on their having being coined at that time.[129]

The situation is similar with respect to archaeological evidence. Excavation has uncovered few artefacts of Scandinavian provenance or bearing Scandinavian-style ornamentation in the Staffordshire area. But the distribution of such artefacts cannot easily be used as an index of the location or scale of Scandinavian settlement. This is because trade and exchange, and the adoption of Scandinavian stylistic influence by 'indigenous' societies, were, in the words of Dawn Hadley, 'equally important in determining the distribution of supposedly "Scandinavian" artefacts'. Moreover, Scandinavian settlement need not, in any case, have been confined to those areas under Scandinavian rule in the later ninth and early tenth centuries.[130]

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[128] S 1606; Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire*, p. 216. The first recorded instance of those minor place-names in Staffordshire which may have been influenced by Scandinavian language is often later still.

[129] For further discussion of the problems in dating Scandinavian-influenced place-names: Abrams & Parsons, 'Place-Names', pp. 382-84.

[130] Hadley, 'In Search', p. 15.

Scholars have often attempted to identify sites of Scandinavian activity on the basis of certain burial customs. These include the deposition of grave-goods and cremation, which are often seen as symptomatic of 'pagan' customs. Yet only a few 'Scandinavian type' burials have been identified in England, and these have been concentrated in the north-west, although several more are thought to be scattered throughout lowland England, mainly in the East Midlands and East Anglia.[131] This picture, however, is based on the long-held assumption that 'Scandinavian type' burials are visible in the archaeological record because the burial practices usually associated with Scandinavians were no longer used in England by the time they began raiding.[132] It is now known, however, that burial practices in both Scandinavia and England were far more diverse in the ninth and tenth centuries than was previously realised: Scandinavian burial practices included both inhumation and cremation at this time, and the situation seems to have been similarly complex in England, where burial with artefacts or in barrows was not unknown. Consequently, Dawn Hadley argues that many examples of burials accompanied by artefacts need not have been those of people of Scandinavian origin, whereas many burials not considered to be 'Scandinavian' (because they do not contain what have traditionally been thought to be signs of 'Scandinavian' practice), could be the burials of Scandinavian settlers.[133]

Nevertheless, two burial sites which have been identified as Scandinavian and which are thought to belong to the later ninth or early tenth century, are located within a few miles of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary with Derbyshire: at Repton, and at Heath Wood, Ingleby. At Repton, a series of burials, identified by the

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[131] *Eadem*, *The Vikings*, pp. 237-46; Richards, *Viking Age England*, p. 142; D.M. Wilson, 'The Scandinavians in England', in *idem* (ed.), *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981 [originally published in 1976]), pp. 394 & 396-97.

[132] Hadley, *The Vikings*, p. 246.

[133] *Eadem*, 'In Search', p. 16; *eadem*, *The Vikings*, pp. 246-55; G. Halsall, 'The Viking Presence in England? The Burial Presence Reconsidered', in Hadley & Richards (eds), *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 259-76.

excavators as being of 'Scandinavian type', were discovered, along with the disarticulated remains of at least 264 individuals, which were stacked 'charnel-wise' around a central burial in a former mausoleum to the west of Repton's Anglo-Saxon church, and which the excavators associated with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's record that a Scandinavian army over-wintered at Repton in 873-74. They dated the remains to 873-74 on the basis of five silver pennies (found within deposits perhaps originally accompanying the central burial), four of which were struck no earlier than *c.* 872, with the fifth perhaps belonging to 873-74, which was therefore, in the view of the excavators, 'the earliest possible and indeed most appropriate time for their deposit'.[134] Yet although a date of around 874 for the burials is possible, strictly speaking these coins only provide a *terminus post quem* for the burials of the early 870s.[135] At Heath Wood, Ingleby, on the other hand, excavators discovered a cremation cemetery comprising 59 barrows, which they believe dates from the later ninth or early tenth century. A combination of ship symbolism, cremation and burial makes this site, in the view of Hadley, 'seemingly the most overt statement of "Scandinavianness" found in a funerary context in England'.[136]

Important though these sites are, for example in relation to what they might reveal about Scandinavian funerary practices in the later ninth and early tenth centuries, they shed little further light on whether the Staffordshire area is likely to

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[134] M. Biddle & B. Kjølbye-Biddle, 'Repton and the Vikings', *Antiquity*, 66 (1992), pp. 39-48; M. Biddle & B. Kjølbye-Biddle, 'Repton and the "Great Heathen Army", 873-4' in Graham-Campbell, Hall, Jesch & Parsons (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw*, pp. 45-87.

[135] A number of the excavators' conclusions, however, have been challenged by other scholars. Dawn Hadley has argued that the discoveries at Repton need not signify the destruction of its church. She argues that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's record of Mercia's division in 877 could imply a 'mutually beneficial' relationship between the two sides, which would not be a suitable context for the destruction of a major Mercian centre: Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, pp. 222-25; *eadem*, *The Vikings*, pp. 13-15. Julian Richards has likewise questioned the excavators' identification of all the disarticulated remains as Scandinavian in origin: J.D. Richards, 'Boundaries and Cult Centres: Viking Burial in Derbyshire', in Graham-Campbell, Hall, Jesch & Parsons (eds), *Vikings and the Danelaw*, pp. 100-01.

[136] Hadley, 'In Search', p. 17. For further discussion: J.D. Richards, 'The Viking Barrow Cemetery at Heath Wood, Ingleby, Derbyshire', *Medieval Archaeology*, 39 (1995), pp. 51-70.

have fallen under Scandinavian rule at around this time, beyond what is known from written sources. Given that Scandinavian armies were active in and around the future shire between the 870s and 910s, it is unsurprising that there is evidence of Scandinavian burials in the Staffordshire area. Indeed, even if it could be argued that burials of this type could only have taken place in areas under Scandinavian control, and consequently that Staffordshire was at this time either under, or on the margins of, Scandinavian rule, without more precise dates for the two sites we would not know either when or for how long this situation had persisted.[137]

It therefore seems that the evidence of place-names and archaeology adds little to our understanding of whether Scandinavian rule is likely to have impinged on the area which came to be known as Staffordshire in the later ninth and early tenth centuries. Indeed, archaeology and place-names provide no positive evidence either way: i.e. they give no strong grounds for arguing either that this area did, or did not, fall under Scandinavian rule at this time.[138]

6.5 Conclusions

The available evidence does not allow firm conclusions to be drawn about whether the Staffordshire area fell under direct Scandinavian rule between the later ninth and early tenth centuries. It gives no grounds for arguing that the future shire cannot have been under Scandinavian control at times during this period: indeed, by the early tenth century the Staffordshire area was certainly on the borders of Scandinavian rule. Nor,

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[137] Julian Richards notes that archaeological evidence is a 'poor witness to particular events': *idem*, *Viking Age England*, p. 20. For further discussion of the uses of archaeological evidence: Wainwright, *Archaeology*, pp. 8-9 & 23-36.

[138] An example of a bow-sided building, characteristic of some tenth-century Danish settlements, has been excavated at Catholme, situated immediately west of Staffordshire's boundary with Derbyshire. The usefulness of the introduction of bow-sided structures as an indictor of Scandinavian settlement in England is, however, questionable: Hadley, *The Vikings*, pp. 106-07.

however, is there any firm evidence that the future shire certainly was under direct Scandinavian control at this time.

Alfred and Guthrum's 'peace' cannot be reliably used as evidence that Scandinavian rule impinged on the Staffordshire area in the later ninth century. The document defines a boundary that runs as far north as Watling Street's crossing of the River Ouse at Stony Stratford, but we do not know what happened to this boundary after that point. Although it is often argued that from here the boundary moved north along Watling Street, perhaps as far north and west as the road's terminus at Wroxeter and thus dissecting the area that came to be known as Staffordshire, without knowing the extent of Guthrum's authority outside East Anglia at the time when the document was originally drawn up, we are not entitled to assume that it did so. Furthermore, the concept of the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' does not provide sufficient grounds to argue that the boundary is likely to have cut and across the Midlands.

We are on safer ground, however, with the division of Mercia said to have occurred in 877. Charter evidence shows that the kingdom was still considered to be divided in the 880s (as, perhaps, does Æthelweard's Chronicle in the 890s), and places that had formerly been part of the Mercian kingdom were certainly under Scandinavian control in the second decade of the tenth century, when the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Scandinavian armies were operating in the East Midlands. Indeed, we have unimpeachable evidence that by this time the Staffordshire area was, at the very least, on the borders of Scandinavian rule, since the Chronicle records that in 917 Æthelflæd obtained Derby, situated only 15 miles east of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary with Derbyshire. There are also reasons to think that at least part of the Staffordshire area may have been under Scandinavian rule prior to Æthelflæd's re-fortification of Tamworth in 913, or at least

that parts of the future shire were not under her direct control at this time. Such a possibility, however, depends upon on a particular reading of two somewhat obscure phrases in the Mercian Register's account of Æthelflæd's building of defences at Tamworth. It is said that Æthelflæd went to Tamworth '*Gode forgyfendum*' (perhaps meaning 'by the grace of God'), and *mid eallum Myrcum* ('with all the Mercians'), statements which could imply that her journey there was undertaken in difficult circumstances and with military support. But other readings are possible, and even if Tamworth really was under direct Scandinavian control in 913, the duration of such rule is unknown. Indeed, the only places close to Staffordshire which were certainly under Scandinavian control are Derby and Leicester, and in neither case is it certain that this control was established before the 910s.[139]

These conclusions have important implications for the study of Staffordshire's origins. It has been seen that one hypothesis for the origins of the West Midland shires is that their boundaries reflect pre-existing land-units, or represent the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units. If there had been strong signs that the area which came to be known as Staffordshire had fallen under direct Scandinavian rule for a significant period of time, then it could be argued that pre-existing administrative arrangements were unlikely to be reflected in the layout of the shire. Yet without good grounds for believing that the Staffordshire area fell under Scandinavian control for much of the period 877-918, and without knowing the effect of Scandinavian rule on administrative arrangements in the West Midlands, the 'Scandinavian issue' provides no grounds for arguing that Staffordshire's original geographical extent could not have been influenced by pre-existing administrative arrangements.

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[139] Having said that, we have also seen that charter evidence indicates that Æthelred and Æthelflæd were able to grant land and privileges at various places in the West Midlands prior to this time.

The results of this chapter also have important implications using the late thirteenth-century extent of Coventry and Lichfield diocese as a guide towards that of the pre-tenth-century province of the Mercians, as was seen in Chapter 4. It is certain that parts of Lichfield's diocese were brought under Scandinavian rule in the later ninth or early tenth century, and we therefore have good reasons to question how far its late thirteenth-century extent is likely to reflect pre-tenth-century arrangements. This could mean that the later ninth and early tenth centuries mark a 'watershed' in our understanding of the development of Lichfield diocese. Lichfield is situated only 15 miles south-west of Derby, and we have already seen that in 1291, when we can first map England's dioceses, Derbyshire was included in its diocese.[140] The problem is that because no pre-tenth-century charters survive for Lichfield diocese there is no direct evidence for which places were considered to be part of the diocese prior to the ninth-century Scandinavian raids. This leaves two alternatives open to us. Firstly, the late thirteenth-century diocese merely reflects what Lichfield was able to claw back, or claim that it had once controlled, following the re-establishment of 'English' control in the East Midlands, and therefore bears little relation to its pre-tenth-century layout. Secondly, the diocese's administrative structures may have at least partly survived the imposition of Scandinavian rule, and therefore the late thirteenth-century diocese essentially reflects its geographical extent in the pre-tenth-century period.

What is known about the late ninth-century Scandinavian incursions does not preclude either possibility. This is partly, of course, because our picture of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands between the later ninth and early tenth centuries is so obscure, and so we do not know precisely which parts of the region were under Scandinavian control, and when. But there is also no reason to suppose that territorial

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[140] In 1291 the diocese never, however, crossed east into Nottinghamshire and only rarely into Leicestershire: Chapter 4.5.2, pp. 129-30.

arrangements *must* have been destroyed in those areas under Scandinavian rule in that period, particularly to the extent that they had to be redrawn from scratch when 'English' control was re-established. Dawn Hadley's work in the Northern Danelaw suggests that many pre-Viking Age churches were still functioning in the early tenth century, and the available evidence provides no grounds for thinking that things were any different in the Staffordshire area than to the north-east.

Archaeological evidence, for instance, reveals that the church of St Alkmund, Derby, had its origins in or before the ninth century, and the discovery of a hogback and a fragment of a cross-shaft with Scandinavian influence on its carving suggests to Dawn Hadley that the church was likewise in use in the tenth century, possibly for burial. Fragments of pre-Viking cross-shafts and sarcophagi have been found at Bakewell, which similarly imply the existence of a pre-tenth-century church. There was undoubtedly also a church there in the mid tenth century since a charter of King Eadred, dated 949, records a grant of land there to a certain Uhtred for the endowment of a *coenubium*.[141] These examples, and many similar ones, have led Hadley to propose the existence of a group of churches distributed at regular intervals

across the northern Danelaw region which exhibit a series of variables, such as pre-tenth-century documentary references and sculpture, superior status at Domesday Book, or mother-church rights over large parishes, that suggest their relative antiquity as a broad but distinct class. 'Whatever else the Scandinavian settlement may have done', she argues, 'it did not apparently result in the eventual disruption or destruction of this layer of ecclesiastical organization. This is not to deny that there may have been great changes, but the basic organizational framework clearly survived the

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[141] Derby: Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, pp. 225-28. Bakewell: S 548 (BCS 884); Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 9, pp. 20-21; Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, pp. 230-31.

Scandinavian settlement'.[142] Thus, the results of this chapter do not invalidate the use made in Chapter 4 of the thirteenth-century diocese of Coventry and Lichfield as a guide towards that of the pre-tenth-century province of the Mercians. Equally, however, whether the diocese's pre-tenth-century extent is less likely to be reflected in late medieval sources than is the case for sees located further west and south remains uncertain.[143]

There are, then, no compelling reasons to believe that the later ninth- and early tenth-century Scandinavian incursions destroyed administrative arrangements in the Staffordshire area to such an extent that the shire's boundaries were, by necessity drawn on a 'blank slate'. Nor, however, has it been shown that this did not happen, but analogy with other areas suggests that even if the future shire did fall under Scandinavian rule, this need not necessarily have led to the destruction of all administrative structures there. In the final analysis, the problems in ascertaining the extent and duration of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands are acute, and, once again, show that the issue of the origins of the West Midland shires is far more complex than most scholars have proposed.

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[142] *Ibid.*, p. 279. For further discussion of the basis of Hadley's view: *ibid.*, chapter 6. For further discussion of the impact of the Scandinavian raids on the church in England: Blair, *The Church*, pp. 291-323.
[143] See also Chapter 4.5.2.

CHAPTER 7

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will consider the origins of Staffordshire's hundreds. Each of the West Midland shires was divided into hundreds by 1086, and so, not unreasonably, the origins of shires and hundreds are generally viewed as being bound together. We have seen that while it is often argued that Staffordshire's hundredal geography was determined by a plan which dictated that each of its hundreds should be assessed for tax purposes at a round number of hides, this model has no solid basis. This is because not all of the places in Staffordshire named in Domesday Book can be assigned to a hundred, and so we cannot reliably calculate the hidage assessment that each hundred carried in 1086.[1] Therefore, if new light is to be thrown on Staffordshire's origins we need to have a better understanding of those of its five hundreds.

Shires and hundreds were not the only administrative land-units that existed in the late eleventh century: the church also had an administrative geography, and one that can often be reconstructed relatively fully. Indeed, when firm conclusions can be drawn about the layout of an area's late Anglo-Saxon secular and ecclesiastical administrative landscapes, the results of such studies have been very productive: in some parts of the West Midlands and southern England, for instance, a close correlation can be seen between the layout of a given area's secular and ecclesiastical administrative land-units, which coincided either one-to-one, or with one land-unit coterminous with several of another sort.[2] Such a close correspondence suggests that

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[1] See Chapter 2.

[2] For example: S.R. Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', in N.P. Brooks & C. Cubitt (eds.), *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 147-73; P.H. Hase, 'The Mother Churches of Hampshire', in J. Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950-1200* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988), pp. 45-66. See Chapter 1.3.2, pp. 24-25.

the layout of one type of administrative landscape may have influenced that of the other. This chapter will therefore investigate what relationship existed between the geography of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds and that of its late Anglo-Saxon parishes. It will reconstruct the shire's early parochial geography, for the purpose of comparing that geography with the layout of hundreds seen in Chapter 2. Much of the chapter will focus on establishing the likely extent of Staffordshire's mother-church parishes, because their reconstruction, it will be seen, requires the synthesis of a very extensive amount of evidence. The implications of there being either a strong or a weak correlation between the shire's ecclesiastical and secular administrative landscapes will be set out shortly, but first it is necessary to explain how the early parochial geography of a given area can be established.[3]

There is general agreement amongst scholars that by the late Anglo-Saxon period, immediately below the level of cathedrals, was a class of important churches, commonly called mother-churches, which had parishes far larger than those of the late medieval and modern periods.[4] While most of the late Anglo-Saxon mother-churches about which we have detailed information were already old by this time, having been founded in the seventh and early eighth centuries, some had been set up more recently. The earlier foundations are often called 'old minsters' by modern scholars, and it is thought that they housed a more or less genuinely monastic community and a number of priests who ministered to their members.[5]

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[3] Below, pp. 240-42.
[4] The following description of the debate over the origins of England's parochial system follows draws heavily on that in S.R. Bassett, 'Boundaries of Knowledge: Mapping the Land-Units of Late Anglo-Saxon and Norman England', in W. Davies, G. Halsall & A. Reynolds (eds), *People and Space in the Middle Ages 300-1300* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 115-42.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 117 & 119.

There is also general agreement that by the late twelfth century many new churches had been established in the mother-churches' parishes. Some, usually called sub-minsters or parochial chapels by modern scholars, were founded by episcopal initiative or by the mother-churches themselves in outlying parts of their parishes, in order to meet the pastoral needs of an expanding population. They were staffed with one or more priests and eventually gained control of the (sometimes large) part of the mother-church parish that they had been founded to serve.[6] Other churches were established at around this time by secular lords near to their manor houses, and although perhaps at first used only by the lord and his family, eventually acquired a 'public' role, being given a priest and allowed a degree of pastoral responsibility under the control of the mother-church or parochial chapel in whose area of parochial authority they stood.[7] These churches are usually called manorial chapels. But in either case, by the late twelfth century many of these new foundations had succeeded in carving out parts of their mother-churches' parishes, which, in turn, became their own, much smaller, parishes. Further, it is generally agreed that by the end of the thirteenth century most of England's parishes existed in the form they would maintain with few changes until the mid nineteenth.[8]

Nevertheless, the parochial independence of the sub-minsters and manorial chapels came at a price. Throughout much of England many mother-churches were still able to exert a measure of control over their former dependencies into the late Middle Ages by extracting payments from their daughter-institutions in 'compensation' for revenues lost when their daughters' parishes had been set up. It is

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 118. For a similar view: P.H. Hase, 'The Church in the Wessex Heartlands', in M. Aston & C. Lewis (eds), *The Medieval Landscape of Wessex* (Oxford: Oxbow, 1994), p. 63; also: J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 383-85.

[7] Bassett, 'Boundaries of Knowledge', p. 118; Blair, *The Church*, pp. 385-95.

[8] Bassett, 'Boundaries of Knowledge', p. 117. For an example of a regional study in which this view is tested and corroborated: D.W. Probert, 'Church and Landscape: A Study in Social Transition in South-Western Britain' (unpublished University of Birmingham PhD thesis, 2002), pp. 33-36.

therefore also well-established that, so long as sufficient evidence survives, it is possible to reconstruct part or all of the mother-church parishes of a given area by studying, amongst other things, the recorded relationships between that area's churches in the late Middle Ages and afterwards.[9]

Much more controversial, however, are the origins of the mother-church parishes. While most scholars agree that many of the 'old minsters' founded throughout England in the seventh and early eighth centuries survived to be mother-churches in the late Anglo-Saxon period, there is strong disagreement about when the 'old minsters' first acquired a pastoral role.[10] Some scholars argue that 'old minsters' had parochial responsibility for defined areas from the very start, and so between the tenth and thirteenth centuries the long-established 'minster system' was replaced by a new system based on local churches serving smaller parishes. Others believe that the 'old minsters' had no such pastoral role until tenth century or afterwards: England was in the process of being politically unified at this time, and it is argued that the creation of parishes for the 'old minsters' and a new, external, role for their priests, was one way in which England's kings attempted to impose uniformity on their kingdom.[11]

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[9] However, only the conclusions of such mapping exercises are often presented in published form, mainly because the evidence required to establish the extents of an area's mother-church parishes is so extensive. Examples of detailed local studies of mother-church parishes include: S.R. Bassett, *The Origins of the Parishes of the Deerhurst Area*, Deerhurst Lecture for 1997 (1998), *idem*, 'Boundaries of Knowledge'; Hase, 'The Church'; D.M. Palliser, 'The "Minster Hypothesis": A Case Study', *Early Medieval Europe*, 5 (1996), pp. 207-14.

[10] For the progress of the debate (listed chronologically rather than alphabetically): C.N.L. Brooke, 'Rural Ecclesiastical Institutions in England: the Search for their Origins', *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto, 1982), pp. 685-711; J. Blair, 'Introduction: from Minster to Parish Church', in *idem* (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches*, pp. 1-19; E. Cambridge & D. Rollason, 'The Pastoral Organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church: A Review of the "Minster Hypothesis"', *Early Medieval Europe*, 4.1 (1995), pp. 87-104; J. Blair 'Debate: Ecclesiastical Organisation and Pastoral Care in Anglo-Saxon England', *Early Medieval Europe*, 4.1 (1995), pp. 193-212; Bassett, *The Origins*; Blair, *The Church*; Bassett, 'Boundaries of Knowledge'.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 119; Blair, 'Introduction', pp. 7-9; *idem*, 'Ecclesiastical Organization', pp. 197-98; Cambridge & Rollason, 'Pastoral Organization', pp. 97-103.

Steven Bassett has argued that if the debate about the origins of England's parochial system is to be moved on, that is to say, if we are to make significant progress towards discovering whether mother-church parishes were newly created in or after the tenth century, or if they were of much greater antiquity, then clear signs must be sought of mother-daughter relationships which can have arisen *only* before the tenth century.[12] While this is undoubtedly true, the main aim of this chapter is not to explain the origins of Staffordshire's mother-church parishes: rather, it is to compare, as far as the available evidence allows, the shire's mother-church parishes – an administrative landscape that everyone agrees was in existence by the tenth or eleventh century – to the shire's hundredal landscape at the time of Domesday Book. Indeed, it seems unlikely that Staffordshire will make a significant contribution to the ongoing debate about the origins of England's parochial system because, as we shall see, there is little evidence relating to the shire's churches prior to the tenth century (although if any of the mother-daughter relationships uncovered do seem to make a contribution to the debate, this will be noted).[13]

The comparison between Staffordshire's mother-church parish and hundredal landscape may throw important new light on the shire's origins and early history in a number of ways. Given that elsewhere in the West Midlands mother-church parishes have been shown to be normally much smaller than hundreds, it is unlikely that there will be a one-to-one correspondence between the two land-units. But if there were a good correlation between them – for example an average of three or four mother-

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[12] Bassett, *The Origins*, p. 20; *idem*, 'Boundaries of Knowledge', p. 138.

[13] Steven Bassett has found evidence to this effect for several places in the West Midlands with better evidence for the pre-tenth-century situation: *idem*, *The Origins*, pp. 6-7 (Bishop's Cleeve, Gloucestershire), 8-9 & 21-24 (Beckford, Gloucestershire); *idem*, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', *Midland History*, 25 (2000), pp. 10-12 (Aston, Warwickshire); *idem*, 'Boundaries of Knowledge', pp. 138-140 (Wootton Wawen, Warwickshire).

church parishes to a hundred – then this would have important implications for the origins of Staffordshire's hundreds, and therefore of the shire itself. Such a situation might, for instance, indicate that Staffordshire, its hundreds, and its mother-church parishes, were created according to a single administrative plan, in which a close correspondence between the boundaries of different land-units was an important factor. Alternatively, if there were good grounds for thinking that Staffordshire's mother-church parishes had been established prior to its hundreds, then it would seem likely that the layout of the shire's hundreds had been influenced by that of a pre-existing administrative landscape and that, once again, considerations other than providing each hundred with the 'correct' tax assessment were important when the shire was created.[14] Such a conclusion would thus provide support for one of the hypotheses for Staffordshire's origins set out in Chapter 1: i.e. that Staffordshire's boundaries reflected pre-existing land-units, or represented the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units. On the other hand, should there be grounds for arguing that the shire's hundreds preceded its mother-church parishes, and therefore influenced their layout, it could be argued that in the case of this shire, the area's parochial geography had little bearing on the origins of its secular administrative landscape.[15]

We may, however, find that there is little or no correlation between the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds and that of its parochial geography. If so, this could be explained in two ways: firstly, that for some reason Staffordshire operated within a

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[14] It has been argued that in other parts of England there are good grounds for thinking that there was a close correspondence between mother-church parishes and secular land-units of probable middle Anglo-Saxon origin. In southern England, for example, it is believed that some mother-church parishes were essentially coterminous with an existing territory of middle Anglo-Saxon or earlier origin, which in the seventh century was likely to be termed a *regio*: Blair, 'Introduction'; Hase, 'The Mother Churches'.

[15] Such a conclusion, however, would have important implications for the ongoing debate about the origins of England's parochial system.

different territorial framework than those parts of the West Midlands where a close correspondence between secular ecclesiastical administrative land-units has been found; or, secondly, that a relatively large number of changes were made to the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds between their creation and our first opportunity to map them in 1086, thereby obscuring the earlier convergence between the two land-units.

7.2 General considerations

One problem that we face is that the pre-tenth-century situation in Staffordshire is very obscure: that is to say, apart from at Lichfield, which is said to have been the site of an episcopal see by the later seventh century,[16] there is very little explicit documentary evidence that any religious institution in Staffordshire of superior status in the late eleventh century had also existed before the tenth. This is for two reasons: firstly, there is no pre-tenth-century charter material relating to Staffordshire or its churches; and, secondly, although there are numerous pieces of Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture, mostly crosses, in North Staffordshire churchyards, unlike in nearby parts of Cheshire and Derbyshire no individual cross is held to have pre-dated the tenth century.[17]

Why this is the case, however, is hard to explain. It is inconceivable that the Staffordshire area lay wholly outside the spread of 'old minsters' in existence

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[16] The Life of Wilfred, usually attributed to Eddius Stephanus, says that '*sciebat sub Wlfario rege Merciorum, fidelissimo amico suo, locum donatum sibi Onlicitfelda et ad episcopalem sedem aut sibimetipsi aut alio, cuicum voluisset dare, paratum*' ('he [Chad] knew of a place in the kingdom of Wulfhere, King of the Mercians, his faithful friend, which had been granted to him at Lichfield and was suitable as an episcopal see either for himself or for any other to whom he might wish to give it'): B. Colgrave (ed.), *The Life of Bishop Wilfred by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), pp. 32-33. Also: E.B. Fryde, D.E. Greenway, S. Porter & I. Roy (eds), *Handbook of British Chronology* (London: Royal Historical Society, 3rd edn, 1986), p. 218; M.W. Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume XIV: Lichfield* [hereafter *VCH Staffs. XIV*] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 5. See, however, Hanbury: below, pp. 295-97. Eccleshall's place-name may indicate that it was the site of a pre- Anglo-Saxon church: below pp. 279-81.

[17] The crosses at Sandbach, Cheshire, for instance are dated to the eighth to ninth century: Blair, *The Church*, p. 309.

elsewhere in the West Midlands in the middle Anglo-Saxon period: part of the shire was apparently within the original heartland of the Mercian kingdom, and so it cannot be believed that 'old minsters' were not founded there at a time when we know that they were being established elsewhere in the kingdom. Alternatively, it could be argued that churches in the Staffordshire area suffered more heavily during the Scandinavian raids of the later ninth and early tenth centuries than did institutions in those parts of the West Midlands which enjoy a better survival of written sources. Yet even if the absence of sources for the pre-tenth-century situation in Staffordshire means that the possibility of heavy disruption to its churches at the hands of ninth-century Scandinavian raiders cannot be discounted, we saw in the last chapter that there are no grounds for thinking that territorial arrangements in this area are more likely to have been disrupted by ninth- or tenth-century Scandinavian raiding than in the East Midlands. There are no signs that ecclesiastical organisation was destroyed in that region, and so it seems likely that the same is true for Staffordshire's churches.[18]

The obscurity of the pre-tenth-century situation in Staffordshire may simply be the result of poor survival of evidence. Coventry and Lichfield diocese certainly had an 'atypical' status in the late Middle Ages. After the Norman Conquest the location of what had traditionally been the see of Lichfield was unstable, being moved to Chester in the mid 1070s,[19] and soon afterwards being relocated once again, in Coventry, in a transfer that was confirmed by Pope Paschal II in a bull dated 18 April

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[18] D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure 800-1100* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 279; see Chapter 6.5, pp. 233-34. For further discussion of the impact of the Scandinavian raids on the church in England: Blair, *The Church*, pp. 291-323.

[19] M.J. Franklin, *English Episcopal Acta Volume XIV: Coventry and Lichfield 1072-1159* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) [hereafter *EEA XIV*], p. xxx. The see of Dorchester had already been moved to Lincoln in 1072, and at the same time as Lichfield was moved to Chester, Sherborne was moved to Salisbury and Selsey to Chichester. For further discussion of these transfers: M. Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 40-41; F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 3rd edn, 1971), pp. 666-67.

1102.[20] According to late medieval tradition, however, a cathedral chapter had been established at Lichfield by Roger de Clinton by the mid-twelfth century, after which time there was over a century of intermittent, and sometimes violent, conflict between the monks of Coventry and canons of Lichfield over primacy within the diocese.[21] The disputes were usually focused on the rights of the two bodies to elect bishops, although a resolution, of sorts, was reached in 1228, when Pope Gregory IX acknowledged the electoral rights of Lichfield, and decreed that both bodies were to elect alternately at Coventry and Lichfield.[22] In a particularly violent episode in 1189, Bishop Hugh de Nonant, who was more sympathetic to the canons of Lichfield than he was to the monks of Coventry, seems to have entered Coventry Cathedral Priory with an armed force, expelled most of the monks, and destroyed their muniment chests. Further losses to Coventry's archives occurred with the destruction of its principal cartulary by fire in 1879.[23] Yet it is unclear how far events like these would militate against the survival of documents relating to the pre-tenth-century situation in *Staffordshire*, and there is no room for special pleading. Indeed, such losses did not prevent the survival of evidence for this area in the post-Conquest period, and so ultimately we are faced with the problem that although evidence relating to Staffordshire's 'old minsters' is undoubtedly poor, finding a context to explain this situation adequately is difficult.

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[20] Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, pp. xxxi-xxxiii, p. 9; P. Heath in M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume III* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. III*], p. 7.

[21] Roger de Clinton was bishop between 1129 and 1148, and so the chapter must have been established by the mid twelfth century. The completion of extensive building work on Lichfield cathedral at around this time is confirmed by its archaeology (although initial work may have begun under one of Roger de Clinton's predecessors). For further discussion: Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, pp. xxxiv, n. 58 & xlii-xliv; Heath in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 8; Greenslade in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XIV*, p. 9; N.J. Tringham in *ibid.*, p. 49.

[22] This did not put an end to conflicts between them: Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, pp. xl-xlvi, xlix-li; *idem* (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta Volume XVII: Coventry and Lichfield 1183-1208* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) [hereafter *EEA XVII*], pp. xxxi-xxxvi; Heath in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, pp. 8-14; Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XIV*, pp. 9-11.

[23] Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, pp. 77-78; *idem* (ed.), *EEA XVII*, pp. xxxii.

Whatever the reasons for the obscurity of the pre-tenth-century situation in Staffordshire, the result is that we are more than usually reliant on late medieval sources, making it relatively hard to distinguish between the shire's earliest churches and those which, although of high status in the late Middle Ages, had been founded more recently. This is unfortunate because the earliest parochial geography of Staffordshire is potentially the most revealing for this study – irrespective of whether that geography came into being in the seventh century or in the tenth century or afterwards.

A number of indicators have been used to locate Staffordshire's high-status churches. Superior status by the end of the eleventh century is one indicator that a particular institution may have been a late Anglo-Saxon mother-church. Such status may be shown by explicit evidence of collegiate life, as revealed by references in Domesday Book to two or more priests or, ideally, a college of canons. The same is true of churches which had a landed endowment of at least one hide in 1086, since the Domesday glebes of ordinary manorial churches (as recorded in East Anglia and Middlesex) were much smaller, and so a relatively generous endowment suggests that the church in question was of unusual status.[24] References to single Domesday priests may also indicate superior status for a nearby church at that time, but exactly who these priests were is far from clear, as, sometimes, is the location of the church to which they were attached. While Domesday Book often records the presence of a priest in places where churches that display other signs of superior status are located, such references to a priest sometimes occur in entries for places whose church shows

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[24] J. Blair, 'Secular Minster Churches in Domesday Book', in P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Domesday Book: A Reassessment* (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), p. 106.

no independent signs of superiority.[25] Yet even if a church was of demonstrably high status by the late Anglo-Saxon period, it need not have been the first church in a given area to have acquired a defined area of parochial responsibility: churches rose and fell in status, and we shall see that some of the most important churches in Staffordshire by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period were almost certainly not among the first in the shire to be founded. A pre-Conquest documentary reference to a church also demonstrates that the institution in question existed by the late Anglo-Saxon period (useful in a shire where much of our evidence relates to the post-Conquest era), as may pre-Conquest sculpture in the fabric of an existing church or in a churchyard – although the dating of such sculpture is subjective.[26]

Mother-church status may also be shown by the association of a particular institution with an Anglo-Saxon saint's cult. Prior to the tenth century there appear to have been very many saints' cults, and those which are visible to us are often associated with known 'old minsters'. Nevertheless, it is rarely possible to prove that any church's association with a particular cult pre-dates the tenth century, since most cults are not recorded until the so-called second 'golden age' of English hagiography, *c.* 1050-1200, at which time, in the words of John Blair, 'many half-forgotten local saints were provided with more or less fanciful *vitae*, but only if their churches still had the status to commission them'.[27] Another important indicator of a mother-church is the maintenance of mother-church rights over large parishes into the modern period, shown, for example, by the existence of dependent chapels which in some

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[25] I was alerted to the problematic status of Domesday priests by Steven Bassett in his paper given to the Research Seminar of the Department of Medieval History at the University of Birmingham on 24 May, 2004 entitled 'Who were the Priests of Domesday Book?'.

[26] Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, p. 219. For discussion of the problems in dating Anglo-Saxon crosses: P.C. Sidebottom, 'Viking Age Stone Monuments and Social Identity in Derbyshire', in D.M. Hadley & J.D. Richards (eds), *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000) pp. 213-17.

[27] J. Blair, 'A Saint for Every Minster?, Local Cults in Anglo-Saxon England', in A. Thacker & R. Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 455-59; 463-64.

instances were not able to break free of their mother-church until the mid nineteenth century or afterwards. Royal and episcopal ownership or patronage in the eleventh century and afterwards has also been viewed as indicative of mother-church status.[28]

The chapter will now reconstruct Staffordshire's early parochial geography. In doing so it is possible to draw on the published and unpublished work of Steven Bassett, Jane Croom, Dawn Hadley, Anne Jenkins and myself in the southern two thirds of Staffordshire. Little such work, however, has been undertaken in North Staffordshire, and so the parochial geography of this part of the shire needs to be established from first principles. The nearest parts of neighbouring shires have also been investigated, so as to assess how well the early parochial geography of the Staffordshire area conformed to the shire's boundary. Since explaining the origins of Staffordshire's parochial geography is not the main aim of this thesis, the reconstruction that follows can be little more than an impressionistic view, and some parts of the shire would benefit from further investigation. But fully reconstructing Staffordshire's late Anglo-Saxon mother-church parishes would require a doctoral thesis in itself. Thus, in the space available it has been possible to do little more than assemble the necessary materials for the study of Staffordshire's early parochial geography, and for forming a first impression of what the shire's mother-church parishes may have looked like, in order to compare those parishes, in general terms, with the shire's late eleventh-century hundredal geography.[29] This comparison will

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[28] Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, p. 279.

[29] For this reason the maps that accompany the reconstruction are also only impressionistic in nature. They are based on the maps published in R.J.P. Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), themselves based on the 'Index to the Tithe Survey' edition of the Old Series Ordnance Survey one-inch maps. A great number of changes were made to parish boundaries in the course of the nineteenth century and so almost no Ordnance Survey map can be relied safely on to show unchanged ones: Bassett, 'Boundaries of Knowledge', p. 116, n. 2. Since explaining the origins of Staffordshire's parochial geography is not the main aim of this thesis, it was not possible to devote the huge amount of research time necessary to map Staffordshire's early nineteenth-century parish

not be made until the end of the chapter, because if meaningful conclusions are to be drawn from this exercise it is important that the reconstruction of the shire's mother-church parishes is made without reference to the layout of its Domesday hundreds.

7.3 Staffordshire's early parochial geography: (i) the North-East

The parochial geography of North-East Staffordshire is relatively complex, especially when compared to that of Central Staffordshire. While in the latter area late medieval evidence points towards a reasonably coherent pattern of mother-church parishes, the parochial geography of North-East Staffordshire is tortuously complex. This means that although a number of churches in the north-east of the shire show signs of being of superior status, the precise relationship between these churches, and also the original extent of their parishes, are difficult to discern: it is very difficult, for instance, to tell which were the area's earliest churches, and which are more likely to have been later foundations (and therefore established within pre-existing parishes).[30] Moreover, the relative 'untidiness' of the situation in this part of the shire makes it hard to tell how well our (predominantly) late medieval picture relates to the area's original parochial geography. It is therefore also difficult to determine whether the complexity of North-East Staffordshire's parochial geography reflects the original parochial arrangements in that area, or of the extent to which the area's geography had *become* complex by the time we are able to map it.

This situation is arguably reminiscent of parts of North-East Worcestershire and North Warwickshire. Steven Bassett has found that there are relatively few clues

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boundaries fully using tithe, estate and inclosure maps. Were this study to be expanded, however, this extremely valuable exercise would be undertaken. See also Chapter 3.2, pp. 72-73.

[30] It is also conceivable that very few (or even none) of the churches in this part of Staffordshire are among the shire's eldest: that is to say, that the future shire's earliest churches could have been founded on its best quality land, which was also most attractive for settlement, with churches in 'marginal' areas perhaps founded at a later date and originally subordinate to those earlier institutions.

to the early manorial and parochial history of the land-units adjacent to the watershed between the Severn-Avon and Trent drainage basins, which forms the northern boundary of the parishes of Cofton Hackett, Alvechurch and Beoley, and the southern one of King's Norton and Solihull. In the late Anglo-Saxon period the area to either side of the watershed contained a substantial amount of woodland and so seems to have lain outside the regular territorial framework in existence elsewhere.[31] Charters and other sources show the importance of these woodland resources, and reveal that blocks of woodland were given to major Anglo-Saxon churches in distant low-lying arable areas. But while the complex manorial history of this area may account for its tortuous parochial geography, Bassett notes that it rarely throws adequate light on that geography's origins. 'As in other districts which were still marginal in the middle Anglo-Saxon period', he says, 'the land in the Birmingham area lying astride the most important watershed in southern Britain was carved up, dealt out and then often reshuffled over several centuries with only a few signs of the process being left in the surviving records'.[32]

It has been seen that North-East Staffordshire was likewise probably still marginal in the middle Anglo-Saxon period: it generally lies at around 600 feet above sea level, with pockets of higher ground rising over 1,000 feet, and is characterised by infertile soils.[33]Although no Anglo-Saxon charters survive for this area, the king's numerous apparently small and scattered possessions in the north and north-east of the shire at the time of Domesday Book, which seem to have provided access to upland grazing and rough pasture for the crown's estates, implies a convoluted manorial

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[31] Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 16.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] See Chapter 1.2, p. 3.

geography at that time.[34] It should also be kept in mind that on the most marginal land precise parish boundaries may have been formalised at a relatively late date, perhaps as late as the eighteenth or nineteenth century, as we have seen to have happened at the boundary between the Cheshire township of Buglawton and the Staffordshire parish of Biddulph.[35]

There is no evidence that mother-church parishes traversed this section of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary. This, however, is arguably unsurprising since that boundary was mainly marked by the River Dove in this area, which is a major natural topographical feature. Domesday Book, for instance, records the presence of a priest at Ashbourne, whose church is around one mile east of the Dove and held one carucate of land in 1086.[36] In the mid thirteenth century Ashbourne was said to have dependent chapels at Kniveton, Mappleton, Thorpe, (Fenny) Bentley, Bradley, Edlaston, Parwich, Hognaston, Alsop, Hulland, and Newbigging. In the nineteenth century the parish also included the townships of Yeldersley, Wyaston, Clifton, Offcote, Underwood and Newton Grange.[37] Of these, the western boundaries of Alsop, Newton Grange, Thorpe, Mappleton, Ashbourne and Clifton were coterminous with sections of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary.[38] Tissington, which divides Newton Grange from the rest of Ashbourne's parish, and whose western boundary also forms part of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire border, was once dependent on the

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[34] King William held land at, amongst other places, Musden, Sheen, Stanshope and Rushton: Domesday Book [hereafter DB], f. 246; A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976) [hereafter *DB: Staffs.*], 1,50-1,52 & 1,64.

[35] G. Ormerod, *The History of the Palatine and City of Chester . . . Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged by Thomas Helsby: Volume III Part I* (London: George Routledge, 1882 [originally published *c.* 1819]), p. 43; also: Chapter 4.3.1, p. 107.

[36] DB, f. 272; P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Derbyshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978) [hereafter: *DB: Derbys.*], 1,14. The earliest evidence for a church at Ashbourne is provided by a fragment of a tenth-century cross shaft: Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, p. 274.

[37] *Eadem*, 'Danelaw Society and Institutions: East Midland Phenomena?' (unpublished University of Birmingham PhD thesis, 1992), pp. 250-51; also: *eadem*, *The Northern Danelaw*, pp. 134-135, 274-75. For Newton Grange: *Kelly's Directory of Derbyshire* (London: Kelly's Directory, 1905), p. 27.

[38] *Eadem*, 'Danelaw Society', p. 251; *eadem*, *The Northern Danelaw*, p. 134; Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, p. 110.

Derbyshire church of Bradbourne, which may itself have once been part of Ashbourne's parish.[39] The very large parish of Hartington, whose western boundary is coterminous with the remainder of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary north of Alsop, likewise shows no parochial links with Staffordshire, and was in any case perhaps originally dependent on the church at Bakewell, located some seven miles to the north-east.[40] These places are illustrated on Map 21.

7.3.1 Alstonefield

The fabric of Alstonefield church contains a small amount of Anglo-Saxon interlace and the chancel arch and south doorway are Norman. Most importantly, however, St Peter's churchyard contains a number of Anglo-Saxon carved stones, most of which are crosses (although since very few such crosses, these ones included, can be shown to be *in situ* we have to keep in mind the possibility that the monuments did not originate here).[41]

Alstonefield church is located at the very south-west of its parish, near the edge of a plateau above the steep-sided Dove valley. We should not, however, read

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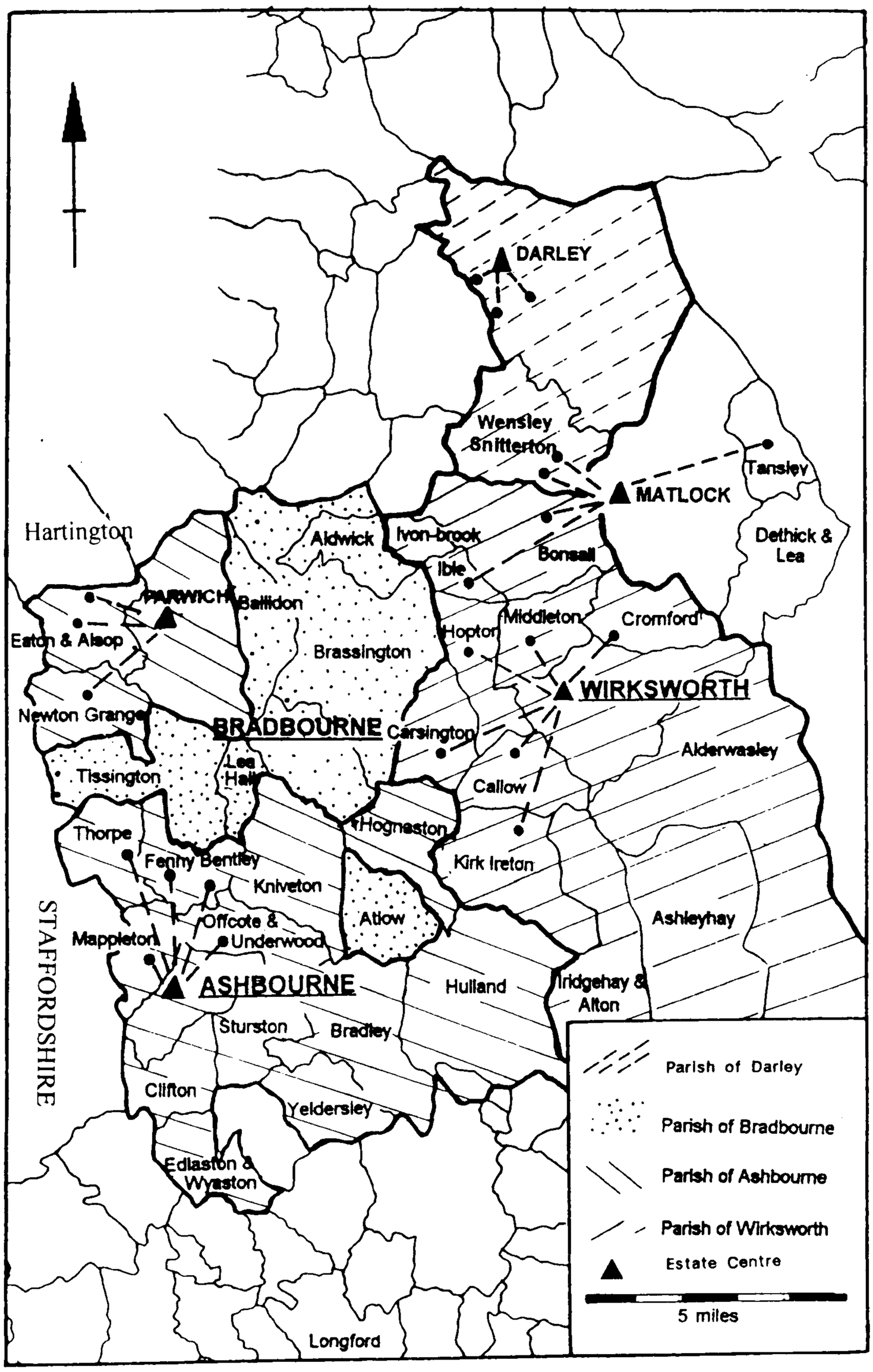
[39] Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 253-55; also: *eadem*, *The Northern Danelaw*, pp. 134 & 278.
[40] *Eadem*., 'Danelaw Society', p. 263.
[41] N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Staffordshire* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974) pp. 54-55; M. Salter, *The Old Parish Churches of Staffordshire and the West Midlands County* (Wolverhampton: Folly Publications, 1989), p. 16; M.W. Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume VII: Leek and the Moorlands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. VII*], p. 23. There are numerous round-shafted Anglo-Saxon crosses in North Staffordshire, and it has been argued that those at Alstonefield represent the last stage of their production: T. Pape, 'The Round-Shafted Pre-Norman Crosses of the North Staffordshire Area', *Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club* [hereafter *TNSFC*], 80 (1945-46), p. 48. Regarding the provenance of Anglo-Saxon crosses such as those at Alstonefield, Phil Sidebottom says 'in most cases sculptured stones are fragmentary and are found rebuilt into later structures or standing in churchyards, and one can really only surmise that they originate from these sites. Records of almost all sculptures usually apply only to the last 150 years or so and the stones may have been subject to earlier removal or relocation'. Nevertheless, while it is unlikely that most free-standing stone sculpture could have remained *in situ* for a thousand years or more, he also points out that 'most monuments have an inherent advantage through their weight and size. Until recently they would have been difficult to transport any distance unless they had been broken into small fragments': *idem*, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture in the North Midlands' (unpublished University of Sheffield PhD thesis, 1994), pp. 144-48. Sidebottom lists the Alstonefield fragments as being not *in situ* but nevertheless reasonably associated with its church, or as having a reliably attested long-standing presence in the churchyard with no known previous provenance: *ibid*., p. 148.



Map 21: Ashbourne's parish (Derbyshire)

Source: D.M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure 800-1100* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 134, with additions

too much into the fact that its nineteenth-century parish was one of the largest in Staffordshire, since it incorporates a great deal of upland and agriculturally marginal land, rising in some places to over 1,600 feet above sea level, and is still very sparsely settled. Alstonefield had dependent chapels at Elkstone, Longnor and Warslow in the late Middle Ages, all of which were still part of its parish in the nineteenth century.[42] The survival of a Norman font in the present church of Longnor, the structure of which dates only from the 1770s, suggests that there may have been a chapel there by the twelfth century, although the earliest documentary reference to a chapel at Longnor is in 1448. Alstonefield was able to exert significant matronal rights over Longnor late into the modern period: in 1773, for instance, its curate was chosen with the approval of the vicar of Alstonefield.[43] There is also a thirteenth-century font in Warslow church, although the present structure was built in 1820. A chapel is first recorded there in 1524, and in 1563 both Warslow and Longnor were considered to be chapels of ease to Alstonefield.[44] A chapel at Elkstone, is also mentioned in 1524. It too was considered to be a chapel of ease to Alstonefield in the sixteenth century, and the vicar of Alstonefield's curate, Luke Storey, served this chapel, along with that of Warslow, in 1766.[45] North-East Staffordshire's early parochial geography is illustrated on Map 22.

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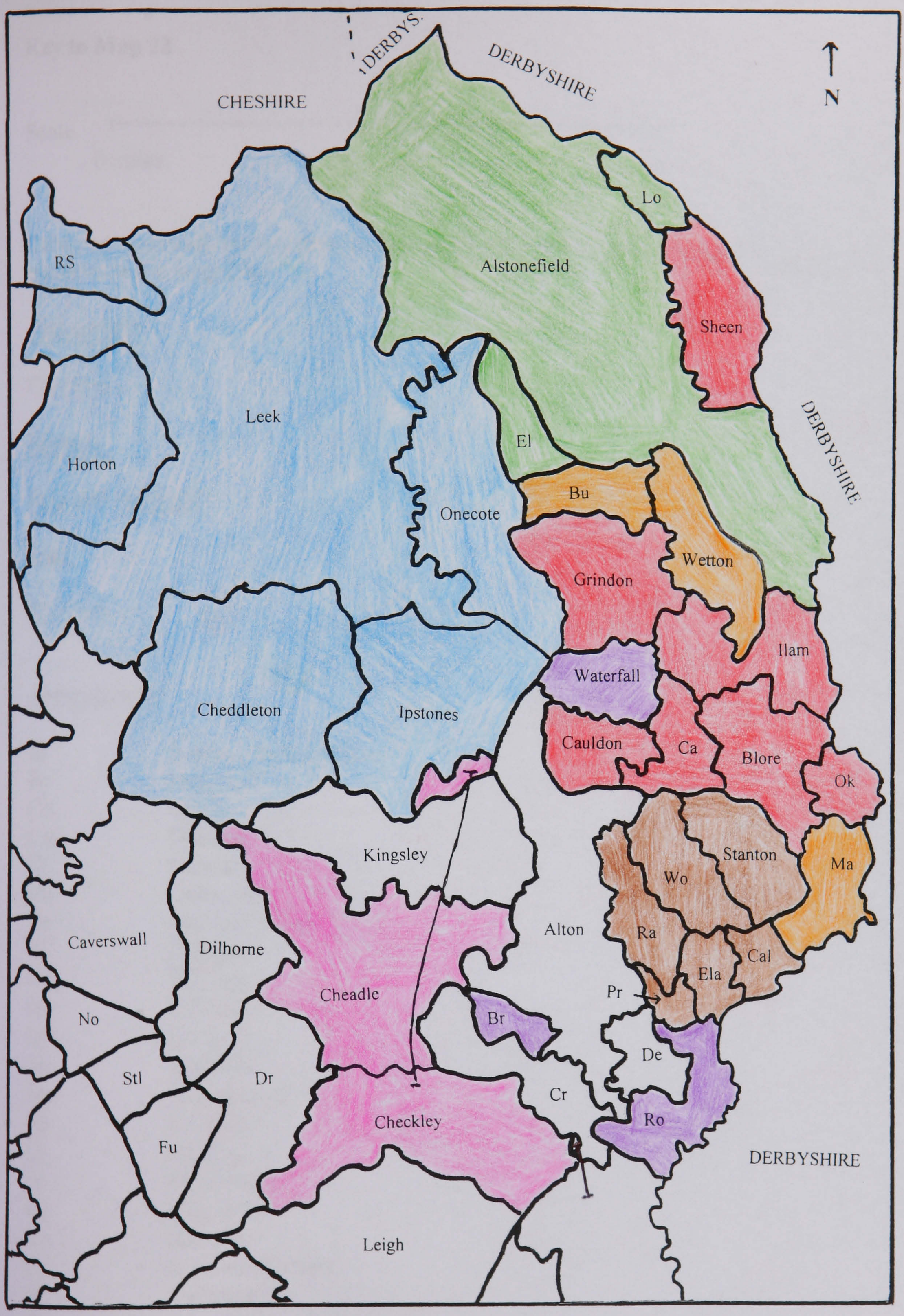
[42] F.A. Youngs, *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England Volume II: Northern England* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1991), pp. 416 & 427.
[43] M.W. Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VII*, p. 23; N.J. Tringham in *ibid.*, pp. 41, 46-47.
[44] N.J. Tringham in *ibid.*, pp. 56, 61-62; W.N. Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents and Parochial Records (1530-1680)* (*The William Salt Archaeological Society: Collections for a History of Staffordshire* [hereafter *SHC*]), 1915, p. 11.
[45] N.J. Tringham in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VII*, p. 61; Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 11.



Map 22: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: north-east.
Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

Key to Map 22

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Alstonefield

Checkley

Ellaston

Ilam and Mayfield

Leek

Rocester

Abbreviations

Br	Bradley-in-the-Moors
Bu	Butterton
Ca	Calton
Cal	Calwick
Cr	Croxden
De	Denstone
Dr	Draycott-in-the-Moors
El	Elkstone
Ela	Ellaston
Fu	Fulford
Lo	Longnor
Ma	Mayfield
Mo	Moddershall
No	Normacot
Ok	Okeover
Pr	Prestwood
Ra	Ramshorn
Ro	Rocester
RS	Rushton Spencer
Stl	Stallington
Wo	Wootton

7.3.2 Ilam and Mayfield

Architectural evidence shows that there was a church at Ilam by the late Anglo-Saxon period and there are several reasons for thinking that it was of superior status. The church's present structure contains a small amount of Anglo-Saxon fabric in the south chapel and has a blocked doorway on its south side, the proportions of which made Nikolaus Pevsner think it was probably likewise Anglo-Saxon in origin.[46] More important, however, is that the churchyard is the site of two late Anglo-Saxon crosses.[47] Furthermore, Ilam is associated with the cult of Bertelin, an Anglo-Saxon saint whose life is depicted on the font (dating from *c.* 1100), and the church contains a late medieval shrine base connected with that saint.[48] Bertelin is also associated with Stafford, but there may have been two Staffordshire saints of this name.[49]

Ilam had a number of dependent chapels in the late Middle Ages. Its parish had once incorporated Blore with Swinscoe, immediately south of Ilam and whose township extended partly into the chapelry of Calton in the mid nineteenth century,[50] Calton, and Okeover. To the north-west, Grindon had once been dependent on Ilam. Sheen was a detached portion of Ilam parish, surrounded to the north, west and south

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[46] Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 153; also: Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 35. H.M. Taylor & J. Taylor say that the exceptionally tall and narrow proportions of a blocked door in the south wall of the nave 'suggest Anglo-Saxon workmanship': H.M. Taylor & J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture Volume II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 719.

[47] Pape, 'Round-Shafted Pre-Norman Crosses', p. 48; Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 153; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 35. The crosses are dated to 'the Viking age' in J. Blair, 'A Saint', p. 473, n. 44. Sidebottom lists the crosses as having a reliably attested long-standing presence in the churchyard with no known previous provenance: Sidebottom, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture', p. 148.

[48] Blair, 'A Saint', p. 473. Salter suggests the shrine base dates from the thirteenth century: Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 35. 'St Bertram's well' is also nearby [SK 137514].

[49] *Idem*, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints', in Thacker & Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints*, p. 516.

[50] *List and Index Society: Tithe Maps and Apportionments Part II: Nottingham to Yorkshire, Wales*, 83 (London: HMSO, 1972), p. 78; Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, p. 472; W. White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Staffordshire* (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1834), p. 728. This link was probably due to Calton chapel's original dependence on Ilam.

by places dependent on Alstonefield; and Cauldon was part of Ilam's parish prior to 1748, when it acquired parochial independence.[51]

Ilam church had been appropriated to Burton Abbey by 1181.[52] In the late twelfth century the Abbot of Burton was said to receive one mark annually from the chapel of Blore, as a result of its being a dependency of Ilam church,[53] and at around the same time the chapel of Grindon was said to pertain to the 'mother-church' of Ilam.[54] In the early thirteenth century rents and other unspecified payments due to the Abbot of Burton from Blore and Grindon were also ordered to be paid at Ilam.[55] Later in that century, and again in 1372, Ilam was said to have dependent chapels at Calton, Sheen and Okeover.[56] A bull issued by Pope Lucius III in 1185 also mentions the church of *Ylum*, with the chapels of *Acofram*, *Blora*, *Grendona*, *Calfdona* and *Scona* listed immediately underneath it (although the bull does not make a link between the church and succeeding five chapels explicit).[57] Sheen was once again described as a chapel in Ilam's parish in the mid sixteenth century, although its separation from the core of Ilam parish makes it unclear whether Sheen had always belonged to Ilam, or whether the connection between the two stems from its having been drawn into Ilam's parish owing to an unrecorded 'capture' by that church.[58]

The late medieval parochial geography of this area implies that Ilam and Mayfield, where Domesday Book records the presence of a priest, were originally part

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[51] Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 407 & 414.
[52] M.J. Franklin (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta Volume XVI: Coventry and Lichfield 1160-1182* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) [hereafter *EEA XVI*], no. 11, pp. 9-10.
[53] Franklin (ed.), *EEA XVI*, no. 12A, pp. 12-13.
[54] *Idem* (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta Volume XVII: Coventry and Lichfield 1183-1208* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) [hereafter *EEA XVII*], no. 2, pp. 1-2; also: I.H. Jeayes, 'Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments Belonging to the Marquis of Anglesey', *SHC*, 1937, no. 32*, p. 19.
[55] Jeayes, 'Descriptive Catalogue', nos 69 & 70, pp. 32-33; also: *ibid.*, no. 82, p. 28.
[56] *Ibid.*, no. 240, p. 80; *ibid.*, no. 536, pp. 139-40.
[57] G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'An Abstract of the Contents of the Burton Chartulary, in Possession of the Marquis of Anglesey at Beaudesert', *SHC* 5.1 (1884), p. 15.
[58] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 230.

of the same ecclesiastical land-unit, as the dependencies of the two churches interlock.[59] For instance, Butterton and Wetton, situated immediately north of Grindon and Ilam respectively, were once dependent on Mayfield: Butterton was a township in Mayfield parish in the mid nineteenth century and Wetton was originally a chapelry of Mayfield.[60] Both places, however, were detached from Mayfield, being situated some eight miles north-west of the parish church. The proposed connection between Ilam and Mayfield is possibly also reflected in a late twelfth-century record of a transaction of 14 shillings between the House and Friars of Burton and William, presbyter of *Methelfeld*, concerning the chapel of Grindon, the latter belonging to the mother church of Ilam at the time. The origin of the payment is unclear, although it was said at the time to have been made because 'payments to increase benefices cannot be made without the Bishop's sanction'.[61] Whether Ilam or Mayfield was the earlier church is unclear, although the presence of the cult of Bertelin by the late eleventh century tips the balance in favour of Ilam.

7.3.3 Leek

The churchyard of St Edward's, Leek, contains two late Anglo-Saxon crosses. Leek's church was also of superior status throughout the late Middle Ages, with a high annual income of £28 0s 0d in 1291, which included that of its unnamed chapels.[62]

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[59] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,23.
[60] Butterton: Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, p. 472; *List and Index Society*, p. 78; White, *History*, p. 756; Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 407 & 417. Wetton: *ibid.*, pp. 417 & 428.
[61] Jeayes, 'Descriptive Catalogue', no. 32*, p. 19. For the identification of Mayfield on the basis of this spelling: D. Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood: David Horovitz, 2005), p. 384; V. Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of English Place-Names: Based on the Collections of the English Place-Name Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 404.
[62] *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P Nicholai IV circa AD 1291* (London: The Record Commission, 1802) [hereafter *Taxatio*], p. 243. Pape suggests that the crosses at Leek may date from the late tenth century: Pape, 'Round-Shafted Pre-Norman Crosses', p. 48. Sidebottom lists the Leek monuments as being not *in situ* but reasonably associated with the establishment, or as having a reliably attested long-standing presence in the churchyard with no known previous provenance: Sidebottom, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture', p. 148.

While the 'core' of its parish was large in the mid nineteenth century, its parish had once been larger still, as Leek had dependent chapels at Cheddleton, Horton, Ipstones, Meerbrook, Onecote and Rushton Spencer in the late medieval period.[63]

In the early 1220s Ranulph, Earl of Chester, granted Leek's church to the monks of Dieulacres Abbey (situated immediately north-west of the modern town). The grant was confirmed by William Cornhill prior to his resignation as bishop of Coventry and Lichfield in 1223, and once again by his successor, Alexander Stavensby, between 1224 and 1228. Stavensby's confirmation mentioned the existence of dependent chapels of Leek at Cheddleton, Ipstones and Horton.[64] The connection between these churches is also shown by a late thirteenth-century dispute between the vicar of Leek and the monks of Dieulacres over the aforementioned chapels, which resulted in the vicar undertaking to provide priests to serve them. In 1450 the vicar of Leek appears to have still been in receipt of the oblations he received following this settlement, at which time he also paid £15 a year to the chaplains of Cheddleton, Ipstones and Horton.[65] There was a chapel in Onecote by 1524, which was usually considered to be within Leek parish, although in 1604 it was inexplicably said to be part of Grindon parish, the latter, as we have seen, a dependency of Ilam.[66]

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[63] D.A. Johnson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VII*, p. 132. Landor argues that Cheddleton, Horton, Ipstones and Longnor may still have been dependent on Leek in the mid sixteenth century: Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. xxxi-xxxii; pp. 60, 130, 133 & 199. Cheddleton, however, is listed as a separate benefice in 1291: *Taxatio*, p. 243.

[64] Johnson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VII*, p. 133; G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'The Chartulary of Dieulacres Abbey, from an Ancient Copy Formerly in the Possession of the Earl of Macclesfield, with an Introduction and Notes', *SHC*, New Series, 9 (1906), p. 311

[65] Johnson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VII*, p. 133. Cheddleton was also the subject of a thirteenth-century dispute between Richard, son of Henry de Chetelton and the Abbot of Dieulacres Abbey over the right of presentation to the church of Cheddleton, the abbey's claim of the right of presentation presumably being based on it having been granted Cheddleton at the time of its foundation: Johnson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VII*, p. 133; G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Extracts from the Plea Rolls, AD 1272 to AD 1294, taken from the Original Rolls in the Public Record Office, with an Introduction', *SHC*, 6.1 (1885), pp. 191, 195 & 199.

[66] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 199; N.J. Tringham in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VII*, p. 215.

7.3.4 Rocester

An Augustinian house had been founded at Rocester by the mid twelfth century,[67] and this, along with the fact that the parish church had two chapels in the late medieval period, makes it likely that Rocester was another of Staffordshire's superior churches, since many religious houses were founded within pre-existing mother-churches.[68]

In the twelfth century it was said that the canons of Rocester were given Rocester church along with its chapels of Bradley-in-the-Moors and Waterfall, both detached from its parish, being situated around three miles north-west and eight miles north-north-west of Rocester respectively.[69] A confirmation of the possessions and privileges of Rocester Abbey by Pope Boniface VIII in 1300 likewise included the parish church of St Michael and the chapels of Waterfall and Bradley.[70] The connection between Rocester and Bradley is also shown by a late thirteenth-century dispute between Robert de Staunton and the Abbot of Rocester over the advowson of Bradley-in-the-Moors, which, along with Waterfall, was described as a chapel of Rocester in 1535. Bradley was described so once again in 1563.[71] Topographical evidence raises the possibility that Alton, whose large parish adjoins Rocester's to the north-west, may too have once been dependent on that church, since Bradley was separated from Rocester by part of Alton's parish. Furthermore, in the late nineteenth century there were a number of small detached 'islands' of Rocester's parish in

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[67] Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, no. 33, pp. 30-31; J.C. Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 247. We have already seen that a mint may have been established at Rocester by the early tenth century: Chapter 6.4, p. 224, n. 120.

[68] Blair, *The Church*, p. 509; H.R. Loyn, *The English Church 940-1154* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), pp. 89-90, 93. Rocester church was granted freedom from all episcopal functions in the mid twelfth century. A similar grant was made to the Burton, Stone and Trentham, and M.J. Franklin argues that this privilege was associated with churches of former secular minster status in Coventry and Lichfield diocese: Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, nos 7 (p. 8), 12 (pp. 11-12), 33 (pp. 30-31), 37 (p. 35), 42 (pp. 39-40) & 74 (pp. 72-73); *idem*, *EEA XVI*, no. 103, pp. 102-03.

[69] J.C. Dickinson, however, does not believe the charter to be genuine: J.C. Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 247.

[70] *Ibid.*

[71] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 214; *Valor Eccleiasticus Temp Henr VIII Auctoritate Regis Institutus: Volume III* (London: The Record Commission, 1817) [hereafter *Valor*], p. 124; G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Extracts from the Plea Rolls, AD 1272 to AD 1294', p. 194.

Denstone, which was once a township within Alton's parish. This situation, however, could have resulted merely from small transfers of land made in the late medieval or modern periods, rather than from Alton having broken away from Rocester's parish.[72]

It is far from clear how St Michael's two known dependencies – Bradley-in-the-Moors and Waterfall – relate to the original extent of its parish. Bradley, at a distance of only three miles from St Michael's (compared to eight for Waterfall) seems the more likely to have originally been part of a territory focused on Rocester church, but it has not proved possible to find further solid links between Rocester and any other churches nearby. The connection between Rocester and Alton is far from certain, and neither Croxden, immediately west of Rocester in the nineteenth century, nor the extensive parishes of Ellaston and Uttoxeter, located immediately to the north and south respectively, display any links Rocester or any other church of superior status.[73]

7.3.5 Checkley

The presence of three fragments of Anglo-Saxon crosses in Checkley churchyard suggests that that this church was also in existence by the late Anglo-Saxon period.[74] Checkley also had at least one dependent chapel in the late Middle Ages, at Cheadle, which lies immediately to the north. In the nineteenth century its parish had a

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[72] For instance when Denstone's parish was created in 1860, as it took in land from the ecclesiastical parishes of Alton, Ellaston and Rocester: Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 401, 409 & 420. For the detached sections of Rocester in Denstone: T. Cockin, *Biographical County Maps: Staffordshire* (Barlaston: Malthouse Press, 2006).

[73] It is not certain that Croxden parish existed in the late medieval period: the benefice is not mentioned in the *Taxatio* and does not appear in the Lichfield diocesan returns made in 1563 and 1604, being first mentioned after the dissolution of the monasteries: Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 79-80; Youngs, *Guide*, p. 409. Ellaston comprised the townships of Calwick, Ellaston, Prestwood, Ramshorn, Stanton and Wootton: Youngs, *Guide*, p. 410.

[74] T. Pape, 'The Rectangular-Shafted Pre-Norman Crosses of North Staffordshire', *TNSFC*, 81 (1946-47), pp. 24-31; Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 100; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 24. None of these scholars comment on the antiquity of these crosses. Philip Sidebottom lists the Checkley cross-fragments as having a reliably attested long-standing presence in the churchyard with no known previous provenance: Sidebottom, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture', p. 148.

detached 'island' north of Kingsley, whose parish was sandwiched between Cheadle and areas which can be shown to have belonged to either Leek or Ilam. Kingsley parish shares a convoluted boundary with Cheadle, implying that they may have once been part of the same land-unit, and therefore that Kingsley was perhaps once dependent on Checkley too.[75] It is possible that Checkley's parish had once been larger still, by including one or more of the neighbouring parishes of Dilhorne, Draycott-in-the-Moors, Croxden, and Leigh, which display no links with any other church.

By the end of the twelfth century Checkley church belonged to Stone Priory, a daughter house of Kenilworth Priory (Warwickshire) which had been founded within the existing church at Stone by the mid twelfth century. Checkley was still appropriated to Stone at the time of the priory's dissolution in 1537.[76] At the end of the twelfth century a certain Alice de Hopton was involved in two disputes concerning churches in this part of Staffordshire: firstly with Kenilworth Priory over the advowson of Checkley church (which Kenilworth claimed through Stone), and, secondly, with Hugh de Nonant, bishop of Coventry and Lichfield from 1188 to 1198, over his admission of Henry of London, archdeacon of Stafford, to the church of Cheadle. The dispute over the advowson of Checkley was eventually settled in Alice's favour, at which time she said that Bishop Hugh's presentation of Henry to Cheadle was unjust because it was a chapel pertaining to the mother church of Checkley, which was in her gift.[77]

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[75] Kingsley also shows no connections with other high-status churches nearby.

[76] Franklin (ed.), *EEA XVII*, no. 30, pp. 27-28. For the foundation of Stone priory and its possessions in 1537: J.C. Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, pp. 240 & 246.

[77] '*Alicia dicit quod revera predictus episcopus Hugo eum* [i.e. Henry of London, archdeacon of Stafford] *in ea instituit, sed vi et iniuste quia ecclesia* [i.e. Cheadle] *illa est capella pertinens ad matricem ecclesiam de Checkele que de sua donatione*': Franklin (ed.), *EEA XVII*, no. 55, pp. 49-50. Also: *ibid.*, no. 30, pp. 27-28. Franklin lists Checkley church as in Warwickshire, but this must be a mistake because there is no place named Checkley in that shire.

The distance between Checkley and Stone (approximately six miles) combined with the late medieval connection between the former church and Stone Priory, raises the possibility that Checkley originated as a parochial chapel of St Wulfad's, Stone, which almost certainly was a mother-church in the late Anglo-Saxon period. That is to say, since it is only six miles from Stone, Checkley may have once been within Stone's parish, and thus was appropriated to the priory when the Augustinian house was founded within St Wulfad's church. If Checkley was a chapel of Stone's, then it seems likely that the parishes of Draycott-in-the-Moors and (perhaps) Dilhorne, which lie between the area which can be shown to have been dependent on Stone and the parishes of Checkley and Cheadle, were also once part of Stone's parish.[78] But no foundation charter survives for the priory and so Checkley equally might never have been part of Stone's parish, with the link between it and the priory merely resulting from its having been granted to the priory at some point before the end of the twelfth century, as, more obviously, was the case with the distant church of Tysoe (Warwickshire). Tysoe was given to the priory in the mid twelfth century, and like Checkley was still appropriated to it in 1537.[79]

7.4 Staffordshire's early parochial geography: (ii) the North-West

Like North-East Staffordshire, much of the north-west of the shire is characterised by relatively poor quality land. Further south, however, the landscape takes on a more undulating character, and like much of Central Staffordshire, is suitable for pasture,

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[78] This would admittedly make Stone's parish very large, at least compared to other mother-church parishes in Staffordshire, although not impossibly so: see Lichfield, below.

[79] Tysoe was granted, along with considerable other temporal and spiritual property in the mid twelfth century: R.W. Eyton (ed.), 'The Staffordshire Chartulary: Series I. of Ancient Deeds', *SHC*, 2.1 (1881), p. 210. Dickinson suggests that 'it is possible that [the document in question] is in fact the foundation charter of Stone Priory': Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 240.

rarely rising to more than 400 feet above sea level.[80] Although some parishes in this part of the shire are partly divided between Staffordshire and either Shropshire or Cheshire, once again there is no widespread evidence that the shire boundary ignored the parochial geography of this area (or vice versa).[81] It has not, however, been possible to assign the Staffordshire parishes of Audley, Betley, Biddulph, and Madeley, whose northern and western boundaries run – at least for part of their courses – with the boundary between Cheshire and Staffordshire, to any high-status church. This means that we have to keep in mind the possibility that they had once been dependent on churches in Cheshire. These places are all illustrated on Map 25.

Although there are a number of churches in North-East Shropshire which show signs of being of superior status, the relationship between them has proved difficult to reconstruct. The way that the parishes of Chetwynd and Edgmond interlock, both situated within a few miles of the Staffordshire-Shropshire border, implies that they had once been part of the same land-unit. Domesday Book records the presence of a priest at Chetwynd, and Edgmond seems to have had a number of dependencies in the late Middle Ages, at Church Aston, Newport, Longford and Tibberton, all located in Shropshire.[82] These places are illustrated on Map 23.

Domesday Book also records the presence of priests at Hodnet, Prees and Drayton, all three situated within ten miles of the Staffordshire-Shropshire

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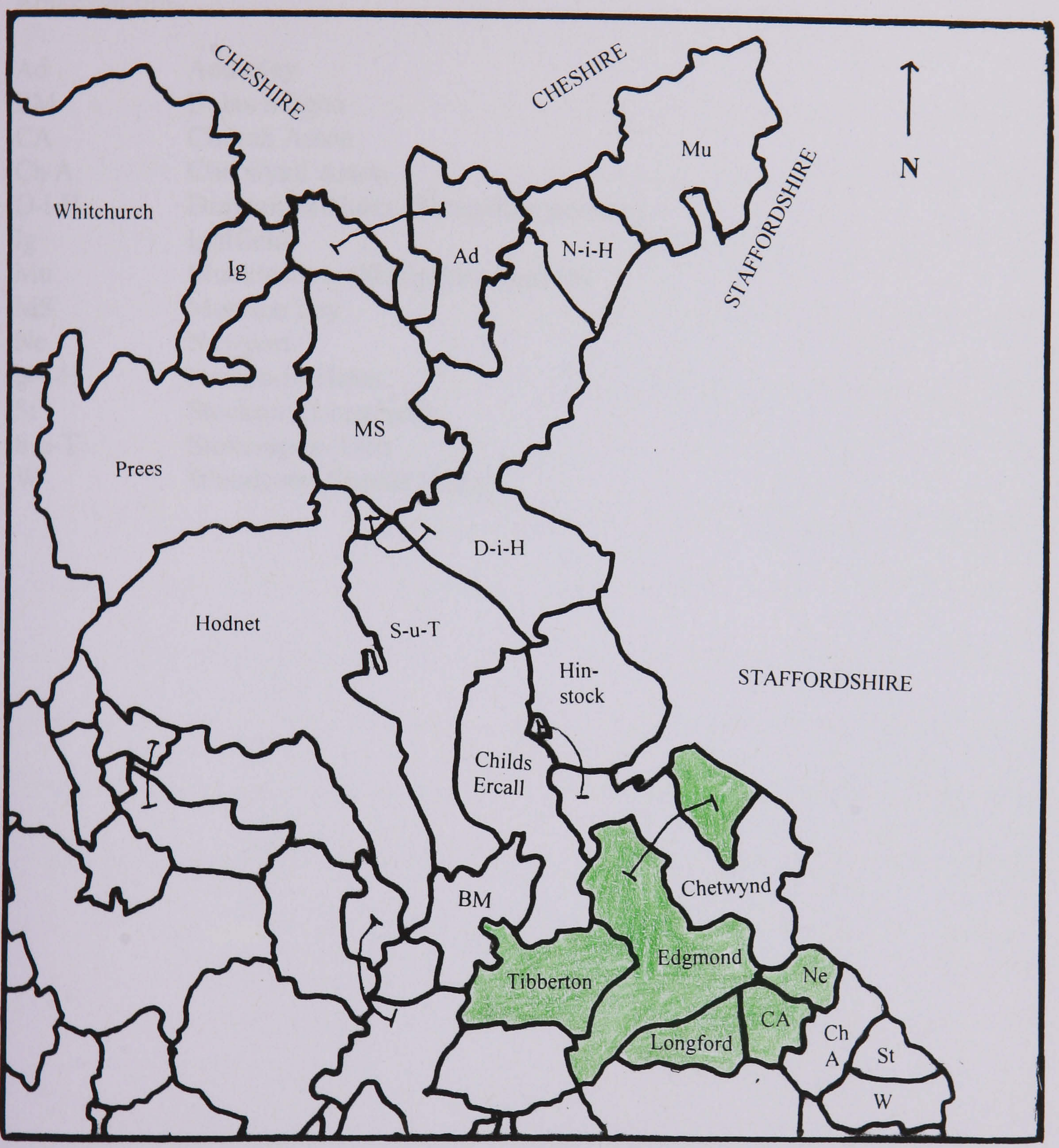
[80] H.C. Darby & I.B. Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography of Midland England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1971), p. 212; A.E. Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context of the Royal Free Chapels of South Staffordshire' (unpublished University of Birmingham MPhil thesis, 1988), p. 19; L. Dudley Stamp (ed.), *The Land of Britain: The Report of the Land Utilisation Survey of Britain Part 61: Staffordshire* (London: Geographical Publications, 1945), pp. 571-74, 615-19. Peaty soils, however, mean that there is a small area of very productive land around Audley: *ibid.*, p. 620. See also Chapter 1.2, p. 3.

[81] The parishes in question are Drayton-in-Hales and Mucklestone: Chapter 4.3.6, pp. 116-17.

[82] Church Aston: *The Antiquities of Shropshire Volume IX* (London: John Russell Smith, 1859), p. 125; Longford: *ibid.*, p. 127, n. 1; Newport: *ibid.* & p. 139; Tibberton: *idem*, *The Antiquities of Shropshire Volume VIII* (London: John Russell Smith, 1858), p. 50. For Chetwynd: DB, f. 257; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, 4,19,2.



Map 23: Shropshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: north-east.
Areas dependent on Edgmond in the late Middle Ages coloured. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 411

Key to Map 23

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

Ad	Adderley
BM	Bolas Magna
CA	Church Aston
Ch A	Chetwynd Aston
D-i-H	Drayton-in-Hales (Shropshire portion)
Ig	Ightfield
Mu	Mucklestone (Shropshire portion)
MS	Moreton Say
Ne	Newport
N-i-H	Norton-in-Hales
St	Stockton (Longford)
S-u-T	Stoke-upon-Tern
W	Woodcote (Sheriff Hales)

boundary.[83] By the mid twelfth century Hodnet church and its (apparently) unnamed chapels belonged to Shrewsbury Abbey (i.e. St Peter's, Shrewsbury) and in 1535 Hodnet church paid a pension of £3 to a chapel at Marchamley, situated just over a mile north-west of the modern settlement of Hodnet.[84] The church at Prees, immediately west of Hodnet, was collegiate until the thirteenth century, and R.W. Eyton argued that it had probably been so in the Anglo-Saxon period.[85] Considering the proximity of Drayton, Hodnet and Prees to each other it seems that one or more of these churches must have originated as a parochial chapel within the parish of an earlier church. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to establish which of them was likely to have been the earliest foundation, or whether any (or all) had once been dependent on a different church nearby.

Unlike North-East Shropshire, the early parochial geography of Eastern Cheshire is apparently easy to decipher. Eastern Cheshire, like much of the shire, seems to have been dominated by a small number of churches throughout the late Middle Ages, which, for the most part, seem to have retained matronal rights over extensive parishes into the nineteenth century.[86] Unlike in Staffordshire, the layout of mother-church parishes in Cheshire thus seems to have survived essentially intact until the nineteenth century, with large parishes that contained many townships

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[83] Drayton: DB, f. 257; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Shropshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986) [hereafter *DB: Shrops.*], 4,14,9 & n. for 4,14,9; Hodnet: DB, f. 253; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, 4,1,4; Prees (held by the Bishop of Chester in 1086): DB, f. 252; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, 1,8. At this time Hodnet was also the *caput* of the hundred of the same name.

[84] R.W. Eyton, *Antiquities IX*, p. 339; *Valor*, p. 184.

[85] Eyton, *Antiquities IX*, pp. 256-57. R.W. Eyton could not understand why Drayton was described as a berewick in 1086, 'especially', he says, 'when the mention of a Priest indicates that there was a Church there': *ibid.*, p. 185. There are two entries for a place called *Draitune* in the Shropshire Domesday: one held by Thorold, and the other, at which the presence of a priest is recorded, held by William Pandolf as a berewick of his manor of Alkington: DB, ff. 257 & 258; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, 4,14,9 (Pandolf) & 4,19,8 (Thorald).

[86] For a reconstruction of Cheshire's mother-church parishes: A. Thacker in B.E. Harris (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Cheshire Volume I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) [hereafter *VCH Cheshire I*], p. 270 (fig. 36).

dependent on a central church.[87] Constraints of space, however, mean that just one example, that of Astbury, situated close to the border between Cheshire and Staffordshire, will be used to illustrate this situation.

In the nineteenth century Astbury's parish comprised eleven townships, but seems formerly to have included the then independent parishes of Brereton cum Smethwick, Church Lawton and Swettenham, which had all once paid small pensions to the rector of Astbury.[88] Astbury's townships were: Buglawton, Congleton, Davenport, Eaton, Hulmewalfield, Moreton cum Alcumlow, Newbold Astbury, Odd Rode, Radnor, Smallwood and Somerford Booths. It is significant that of these places only Astbury is mentioned in the Taxatio.[89] This, combined with the facts that, firstly, only Brereton, Church Lawton and Swettenham are listed as a separate benefices by the *Valor*, and, secondly, that few of the above townships appear to have had a church or chapel until the mid nineteenth century, makes it appear that Astbury was able to retain parochial responsibility for a very large area into the nineteenth century (although a chapel had been established at Congleton by the reign of Elizabeth I).[90] Furthermore, Astbury does not seem to have been unique: we find a similar situation in each of the other three superior churches whose parishes fell on the Cheshire side

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[87] As discussed by John Blair: Blair, *The Church*, pp. 308-09.

[88] G. Ormerod, *The History of the Palatine and City of Chester . . . Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged by Thomas Helsby* [hereafter *The History*] *Volume III Part I* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1882 [originally published *c.* 1919]), p. 21.

[89] *Taxatio*, p. 248.

[90] *Valor Eccleiasticus Temp Henr VIII Auctoritate Regis Institutus: Volume V* (London: The Record Commission, 1825), p. 214. Ormerod says that 'the church of Brereton was anciently dependent upon Astbury, but was made parochial in the time of Richard the First' [i.e. 1189-199]. It paid a pension of 14 d. to the rector of Astbury: Ormerod, *The History III Pt I*, p. 92. For Congleton's chapel: *ibid.*, p. 38. The southern doorway of Church Lawton church is Norman and so shows that this church was in existence by the end of the twelfth century. Brereton is late perpendicular in style and Swettenham church was built between 1717 and 1722: N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cheshire* (London: Penguin, 1971), pp. 114, 178 & 348. For Astbury's townships: *ibid.*, pp. 118 (Buglawton), 207 (Eaton), 245 (Hulmewalfield) & 335 (Smallwood and Somerford). The chapel at Somerford, however, was built in 1725. We must keep in mind that these nineteenth-century churches were not necessarily the first to be built at the above locations: although Congleton had a chapel by the reign of Elizabeth I, the present parish church dates from only 1740-42: *ibid.*, p. 182.

of the Staffordshire-Cheshire boundary (Barthomley, Prestbury and Wybunbury), as illustrated on Map 24.[91]

There are, however, signs that the situation in East Cheshire may have been less straightforward than it first appears to be. Astbury's name, for instance, is derived from Old English *ēast* + *byriġ*, dative singular of *burh* (i.e. 'the eastern fortified place').[92] Directional place-names like this usually indicate a dependence on a more important place elsewhere: that is, Astbury's name suggests that it was the eastern fortified place within a land-unit focused on somewhere to the west. The most obvious candidate for this is Sandbach, with its important group of eighth- to ninth-century crosses and a parish that seems to have interlocked with that of Astbury.[93] It may, then, be that Astbury originated as a sub-minster of Sandbach, but was able to break free from that church, leaving no trace of its formerly dependent position in later sources. But even if Astbury were named in relation to Sandbach, we are still faced with the question of why churches in Cheshire appear to have been more than usually successful at retaining mother-church parish rights over extensive areas. Could Cheshire's parochial landscape have been 'tidied up' at some unrecorded point?[94] If that is so, who was responsible, and why does the process not appear to have been extended into Staffordshire? Alternatively, might our picture of Cheshire be distorted by the apparent lateness of much of the evidence relating to it (i.e. could Cheshire's parochial landscape have been reorganised by the nineteenth century, from when much of the evidence discussed above dates)?[95]

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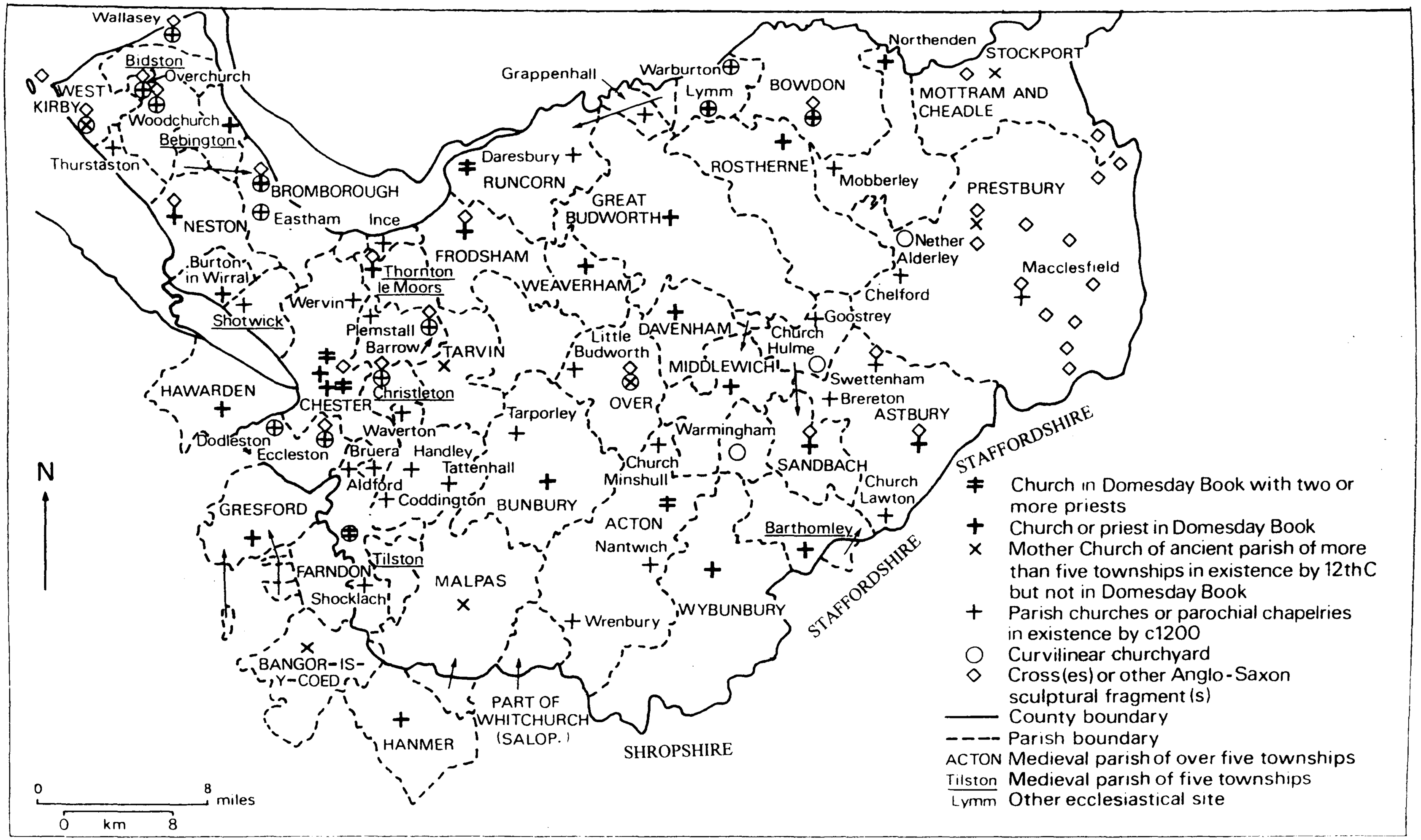
[91] Wybunbury is said to have chapels by the Taxatio, but they are not named: *Taxatio*, p. 248.
[92] Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 23.
[93] As argued by John Blair: Blair, *The Church*, p. 309 & n. 94. For the significance of directional names: *ibid.*, pp. 214-15 & 251-52; Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', pp. 12 & 19-20.
[94] As suggested by John Blair: Blair, *The Church*, p. 309; see also below, pp. 334-35.
[95] Nick Higham has noted that the apparent regularity of organisation in Cheshire is at odds with the situation characteristic of mother-church parishes nationally. Indeed, he suggests that 'the exceptionally disciplined pattern which can be detected may result in part from the very late date at which most manorial churches came into existence. Cheshire was', he says, 'distant from the competitive church-



Map 24: A reconstruction of Cheshire's late Anglo-Saxon mother-church parishes

Source: A. Thacker in B.E. Harris (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Chester Volume I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 270, with additions

Whatever the explanation for the situation in Cheshire, there are very few instances of parishes belonging to high-status churches crossing the Staffordshire-Cheshire boundary. Moving from south to north, Domesday Book records the presence of a priest at Wybunbury, located approximately three miles west of the border between the two shires.[96] In the nineteenth century its parish consisted of 18 townships and covered a wide area, with the townships of Blackenhall, Checkley cum Wrinehill, Chorlton and Weston marching with the Staffordshire-Cheshire border.[97] All except Checkley cum Wrinehill, which partly extended into Staffordshire at Wrinehill, were entirely within Cheshire at that time.[98] A priest is also mentioned in the Domesday entry for Barthomley. This church was another focus for the cult of St Bertalin, to whom it is dedicated, suggesting that it was probably of superior status in the late Anglo-Saxon period.[99] In the nineteenth century Barthomley served a fairly extensive parish consisting of five townships: Alsager, Barthomley (both on the Staffordshire-Cheshire border), Balterley, Crewe and Haslington.[100] Balterley township, however, was in Staffordshire in the nineteenth century, as had the manor of Balterley been in 1086.[101]

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building of the tenth and eleventh centuries which characterised parts of East Anglia and the south of England, and had resources too meagre to encourage excessive investment in the area': N.J. Higham, *The Origins of Cheshire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 176-78.

[96] DB, f. 263; P. Morgan (ed.), *Domesday Book: Cheshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1978) [hereafter *DB: Cheshire*], B8.

[97] G. Ormerod, *The History of the Palatine and City of Chester . . . Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged by Thomas Helsby: Volume III Part II* (London: George Routledge, 1882 [originally published *c.* 1819]), p. 482.

[98] Higham, *The Origins* p. 141; Ormerod, *The History III Pt II*, p. 482. In 1902 Wrinehill was described as 'a hamlet partly in Cheshire and partly in Staffordshire': *Kelly's Directory of Cheshire* (London: Kelly's Directories, 1902), p. 292.

[99] DB, f. 265; Morgan (ed.), *DB: Cheshire*, 8,30. For the dedication to Bertelin: Blair, 'A Handlist', p. 516; Higham, *The Origins*, p. 143.

[100] A small amount of Hassal township, chiefly in Sandbach parish, also extended into this parish: Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, pp. 69-70, 73, 75 & 471; Ormerod, *The History III Pt I*, p. 299. Alsager was a chapelry of Barthomley: Youngs, *Guide*, p. 8.

[101] DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 17,11 & 17,12. Nick Higham has said that 'an examination of the parish boundaries implies that this area [i.e. Barthomley parish] had been an integral part of [a] land unit based on Wybunbury and it may have been the decay of the effective lordship there during the early Viking Age which enabled Barthomley to be detached from [that] mother-church', although without explaining the basis of this view further: Higham, *The Origins*, pp. 144-45.

North-east along the Staffordshire-Cheshire boundary from Barthomley is Astbury, which has already been discussed. Further north and east still is the exceptionally extensive parish of Prestbury. The parish incorporated over 30 townships in the nineteenth century, but had once been larger still, having previously included the parishes of Gawsworth, Nether Alderley and Taxal.[102] There are a number of round-shafted crosses dating from the late Anglo-Saxon period in Prestbury parish, their presence, argues Higham, enhancing 'the exceptional status of Prestbury's church'.[103] Indeed, the plural form of Prestbury's name, meaning 'the priests' fortified place', implies that more than one priest was associated with Prestbury, and that its church was therefore collegiate.[104] Prestbury's townships of Bosley, Wincle and Wildboarclough are adjacent to the Staffordshire-Cheshire border. Although none of them shows any signs of extending into Staffordshire, and nor is there any evidence of the neighbouring Staffordshire parish of Leek crossing into Cheshire, once again we have to keep in mind the possibility that both shire and parish boundaries were fixed at a relatively late date in this marginal upland area: we know, for instance, that the boundary between Buglawton (Cheshire) and Biddulph (Staffordshire) was only fixed in the eighteenth or nineteenth century.[105]

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[102] Higham, *The Origins*, p. 172; Ormerod, *The History III Pt II*, pp. 399, 536, 547, 646 & 777; Thacker in Harris (ed.), *VCH Cheshire I*, p. 265. John Blair comments that Prestbury 'may have been the largest mother-church parish in England': Blair, *The Church*, p. 309.
[103] Higham, *The Origins*, p. 172.
[104] J.M. Dodgson, *The Place-Names of Cheshire Part I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 212; Higham, *The Origins*, p. 172; Thacker in Harris (ed.), *VCH Cheshire I*, p. 265; Watts (ed.), *Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 482. In this instance Dodgson and Watts translate *burh* as 'manor' as opposed to 'fortified place'.
[105] See Chapter 4.3.1, p. 107.

7.4.1 Stoke[106] and Trentham

Domesday Book contains no entry for Stoke, but the entry for nearby Caverswall, situated around five miles south-east of Stoke, records that this manor contained '*medietas æccl'æ de Stoche cū dim' caruc' t'ræ*' ('half of [the endowment of] Stoke church, with half a carucate of land').[107] Stoke is one of a number of places in Staffordshire which are not named in Domesday Book in spite of there being good reasons to believe they were the sites of high-status churches in 1086. There are two possible explanations for this: firstly, that the church in question held the manor in which it stood in free alms at the time, meaning that there was no need for that manor to be recorded in Domesday;[108] or, secondly, that the church was considered to be part of a manor of a different name in 1086 (the most likely candidate in this case being the manor of Penkhull, which does have a Domesday entry and is located around a mile west of Stoke's parish church).[109] Neither explanation can be proved in the case of Stoke, although the fact that only half of its endowment is recorded by Domesday Book suggests that the other half was held in free alms. All of North-West Staffordshire's high-status churches are illustrated on Map 25.

Although the present church of St Peter ad Vincula at Stoke was built in the early nineteenth century, two fragments of what is thought to be a late Anglo-Saxon stone cross were dug up near the line of the south wall of the former church in

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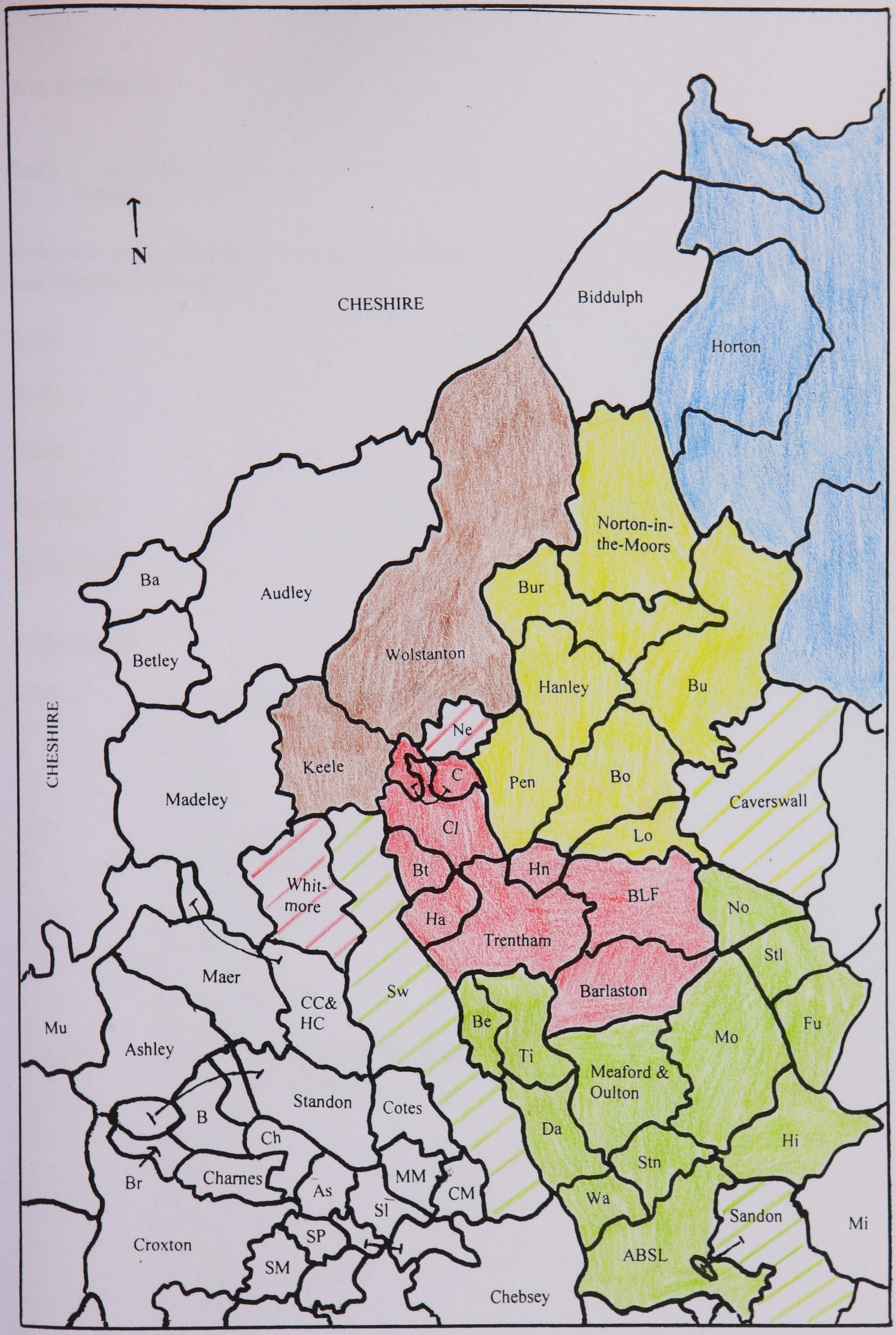
[106] Although this ecclesiastical parish was called Stoke-upon-Trent by the mid nineteenth century, the name 'Stoke' will be adopted for both the parish and manor of that name here, so as to distinguish it from the modern North Staffordshire conurbation, which is usually called Stoke-on-Trent: Youngs, *Guide*, p. 423.

[107] DB, f. 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 11,36.

[108] That is to say, no secular service would be owed on land granted to a religious institution in 'free alms', and so manors being held according to this type of tenure would not need to be recorded by Domesday Book. For further discussion of the meaning of 'free alms': F. Pollock & F.M. Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1898), pp. 240-51; also: A.W. Douglas, 'Frankalmoin and Jurisdictional Immunity: Maitland Revisited', *Speculum*, 53 (1978), pp. 26-48.

[109] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,16. Penkhull township was also the location of the church of Stoke: J.G. Jenkins in *idem* (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume VIII* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. VIII*], p. 173.



Map 25: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: north-west.
Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

Key to Map 25

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Leek

Stoke

Stone

Trentham

Wolstanton

Abbreviations

ABSL	Aston, Burston, Stoke and Little Aston
As	Aspley
B	Bromley
Ba	Balterley
Be	Beech
BLF	Blurton and Lightwood Forest
Bo	Botteslow, Fenton Vivian and Fenton Culvert
Br	Broughton
Bu	Bucknall, Bagnall and Eaves
Bur	Burslem
Bt	Butterton
C	Clayton Griffith
Ch	Chatcull
CC&HC	Chapel Chorlton and Hill Chorlton
Cl	Clayton and Seabridge
CM	Cold Meece
Da	Darlaston
Fu	Fulford
Ha	Hanchurch
Hi	Hilderstone
Hn	Hanford
Lo	Longton and Lane End
Mi	Milwich
MM	Mill Meece
Mo	Moddershall
Mu	Mucklestone
Ne	Newcastle-under-Lyme
No	Normacot
P	Podmore

Pe	Pershall
Pen	Penkhull and Boothen
Sl	Slindon
SM	Sugnall Magna
SP	Sugnall Parva
Stl	Stallington
Stn	Stone
Sw	Swynnerton
Ti	Tittensor
Wa	Walton

1876.[110] Stoke was also a high-status church throughout the late Middle Ages, serving an extensive parish, and being valued (along with unnamed chapels) at £40 0s 0d in 1291, a very high amount for a Staffordshire church.[111] In 1563 Stoke was said to have six chapels, at Bagnall, Bucknall, Burslem, Newcastle, Norton-in-the-Moors and Whitmore, with the latter four places also described as churches annexed to Stoke in 1604.[112] Many of these places were still part of Stoke's parish in the early nineteenth century, which comprised a number of townships, which are depicted on Map 25 as Botteslow, Fenton Vivian and Fenton Culvert; Bucknall, Bagnall and Eaves; Hanley; Longton and Lane End; and Penkhull and Boothen. At that time the parish also included Clayton, but this had previously belonged to Trentham.[113] Given that we know that half of Stoke's late eleventh-century landed endowment was in Caverswall, and considering its proximity to Stoke, it is very likely that Caverswall had once been part of Stoke's parish too. We shall see, however, that Newcastle, and possibly also Whitmore, had previously been dependent on Trentham, another important church located just three miles to the south-west of Stoke, but were captured by Stoke prior to 1563.

The proximity of Stoke and Trentham raises makes it seem likely that one church had been founded within the parish of the other, but, if so, the precise relationship between them is difficult to decipher. It used to be alleged that Wærburh, daughter of the seventh-century Mercian king Wulfhere, was founder and abbess of a

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[110] Pape, 'The Round-Shafted', pp. 35-37, 48; Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 262; M.W. Greenslade in Jenkins (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VIII*, p. 191. Although not *in situ*, Sidebottom lists the monument as reasonably associated with Stoke church: Sidebottom, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture', p. 149.

[111] *Taxatio*, p. 242.

[112] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 248-53.

[113] Below, p. 269. Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, pp. 472 & 476-77. The detail of some of the boundaries between Stoke's townships is not always shown in this source, which forms the basis of Map 25. For instance, while Kain and Oliver depict Botteslow, Fenton Vivian and Fenton Culvert as one land-unit this area actually comprised three separate liberties or townships in the nineteenth century: Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, pp. 148-53.

nunnery at Trentham, but this association has now been rejected. Nevertheless, Domesday Book records the presence of a priest at Trentham, and, like Stoke, its church had a number of dependencies in the late Middle Ages.[114] When in 1229, for instance, a chantry was established in the chapel of Clayton, situated two miles north-west of Trentham, the chaplain had to swear not to retain offerings belonging to Trentham parish church, which was also to receive compensation should any losses to its revenue be incurred.[115] Similarly, in 1282 a certain Adem de Chetwynd was given permission to build a chapel at Hartwell, part of the parish of Barlaston in the nineteenth century, but the priests at Hartwell were to take a yearly oath not to defraud the 'mother-church' of Trentham of any tithes or offerings. This implies that Barlaston too was once dependent on Trentham.[116] Trentham's parish was still large in the nineteenth century, and included a number of townships, depicted on Map 25 as Blurton and Lightwood Forest, Butterton, Clayton Griffith, Hanchurch, Hanford and Trentham.[117]

An Augustinian priory had been founded in Trentham church by the mid twelfth century.[118] We know that Newcastle-under-Lyme was once in Trentham's

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[114] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,8. For Werburgh: J.C. Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs.III*, p. 255. Anglo-Saxon masonry has allegedly been discovered at Trentham: T. Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries of Staffordshire Volume I: Pirehill* (Barlaston: Malthouse Press, 2005), p. 49. We have also seen that M.J. Franklin has argued that Trentham was a secular minster: above, p. 258, n. 68.

[115] J.C. Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 257; F. Parker (ed.), 'Chartulary of the "Austin" Priory of Trentham', *SHC*, 11 (1890), pp. 330-31.

[116] J.C. Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 257; Parker (ed.), 'Chartulary of Trentham', p. 332. For the location of Hartwell, just over a mile west of Barlaston's parish church: Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, p. 23. Barlaston also belonged to Trentham manor in the twelfth century: below, p. 270.

[117] Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, pp. 472-74, 478. For Butterton and Hanchurch: Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, p. 202.

[118] An Augustinian priory was either established or re-established at Trentham by Ranulph de Gernon, Earl of Chester, who died in 1153. The early history of the priory, however, is obscure. In the mid thirteenth century it was thought that the priory had been founded during the reign of William Rufus, and it has therefore sometimes been argued that it fell into decay between this time and its restoration by Ranulph: J.C. Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs.III*, p. 255 (who believes that Ranulph's priory was the first Augustinian house to be established at Trentham); Parker, 'Chartulary of Trentham', pp. 295-98 (who feels that Ranulph refounded an existing priory, first built in the reign of William Rufus). The surviving foundation charter for the priory, which dates from the twelfth century,

parish because in 1162 Pope Alexander III confirmed the status and possessions of Trentham priory, which were said to include 'Trentham with all that pertains to it, namely Barlaston, Betley, half of Balterley, a certain vill of Newcastle which is of the territory of the parish of Trentham, a hundred *solidi* of land in the same parish, which Henry, king of the English, gave to the same church to institute an order…'.[119] Between the late twelfth and the late thirteenth centuries the priory was involved in litigation over chapels at Newcastle and Whitmore, the latter located around three miles west of Trentham. Given that Newcastle was said to have been within Trentham's parish in the mid twelfth century, the canons' interest in it presumably derived from Newcastle's having been a dependency of Trentham parish church and, therefore, granted to the priory at the time of its foundation. Despite there being no explicit evidence to this effect, the proximity of Whitmore to Trentham raises the possibility that it too had once been part of the latter's parish – although, on the other hand, the fact that Whitmore was separated from Trentham by the northern portion of the long narrow parish of Swynnerton (probably, we shall see, once dependent on Stone) suggests that the connection between Trentham and Whitmore might originate from the latter either having been 'captured' by Trentham's parish church or having been granted to the priory before the end of the twelfth century.[120]

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however, speaks of '*restaurandam quondam abbathiam canonicorum in ecclesia de Trentham*' ('the restoration of an abbey of canons in the church of Trentham'), but it is not clear whether *abbathia* refers to the refurbishment of the proposed late eleventh-century priory, or to the refounding of a minster as an Augustinian house: Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 255; W. Page, 'Some Remarks on the Churches of the Domesday Survey', *Archaeologia*, 2nd Series, 16 (1915), pp. 93-94. For the text of the foundation charter: W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum: A New Edition, Edited by J. Caley, Sir Henry Ellis and the Rev. B. Bandinel Volume VI Part I* (London: T.G. March, 1849), p. 397; Parker (ed.), 'Chartulary of Trentham', p. 300.

[119] '*Trentham cum omnibus pertinenciis suis, scilicet Berlaston, Betteleya, dimid' Baltredeleye, quid[am'] viculus Novi Castelli qui est de territorio parochie de Trentham, centum solidatas terre in eadem parochia, quas Henricus Rex Anglorum, eidam ecclesie dedit ad institutionem ordines…*': *ibid.*, p. 303.

[120] LRO B/A/15, Tithe Map for Swynnerton (1848); Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, p. 189.

In 1175x82 the priory was involved in a complex dispute over chapels of Newcastle and Whitmore with a certain Robert de Costentin and his proctor, Vivian of Stoke.[121] The basis of the dispute, however, is obscure, particularly in relation to how and why a settlement was reached. Nevertheless, Robert and Vivian seem to have surrendered their claim in the chapels in exchange for a life interest in Whitmore for Vivian, who was also to act as warrantor against Robert for both chapels, and was allowed to present a vicar at Whitmore as his deputy. His choice, however, would still be subject to the approval of the prior and convent of Trentham.[122] But while the priory was initially successful, it eventually lost control over Newcastle and Whitmore: in 1297 both were said to be chapels of Stoke.[123]

It was not unusual for one church to capture a chapel that belonged to another in the late Middle Ages, as Stoke did with Newcastle (and possibly Whitmore). But events at Newcastle throw little further light on the relative antiquity of Stoke and Trentham churches: that is to say, while it could be argued that the capture of Newcastle indicates that Stoke was the younger and more dynamic institution, able to acquire churches at the expense of its older and therefore less vigorous church at Trentham, the evidence could be read either way. Indeed, it is equally as likely that despite being the elder church, Stoke was able to exert itself more strongly in the late Middle Ages, clawing back parts of its parish which had been lost to Trentham when

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[121] Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, pp. 257-58; J.G. Jenkins in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VIII*, p. 16; Parker (ed.), 'Trentham', pp. 322-23. Vivian is described as rector of Stoke by the *Victoria County History*, but not so in the document in question.

[122] Robert Swanson, pers. comm., 8 January 2008. I am very grateful to Robert Swanson for his help in unravelling the complexities of the record of this dispute.

[123] So too were Burslem and Norton-in-the-Moors – all four of which, we have seen, still subordinate to Stoke in the mid sixteenth century: Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, pp. 257-58; R.G. Jenkins in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. VIII*, p. 16; J.C. Wedgwood (ed.), 'Inquisitions "Post Mortem", "Ad Quod Damnum", Etc., Staffordshire', *SHC*, 1911, p. 246.

the latter institution had been founded (perhaps, even, after the fact that Newcastle had once been part of Stoke's parish had long since been forgotten).[124]

7.4.2 Stone

Stone had a very large parish over which it enjoyed mother-church rights into the nineteenth century, which makes it a very strong candidate as a late Anglo-Saxon mother-church. It was also connected to the cults of two local saints in the late Middle Ages, 'Wulfhad' and 'Ruffinus', who were associated with Bede's account of the murder of the last Jutish princes of the Isle of Wight *Ad Lapidem*. Nevertheless, this does not prove that Stone was a late Anglo-Saxon mother-church, since Stone's connection with the saints could merely be post-Conquest invention by Stone Priory.[125] Stone's nineteenth-century parish incorporated the townships of Aston, Beech, Darlaston, Hilderstone, Meaford and Oulton, Moddershall, Normacot, Stallington, Stone, Tittensor and Walton. Fulford, directly to the north-east of Moddershall township, had also once been part of Stone's parish, but was separated from it in 1774. Chapels at Fulford and Tittensor were recorded in the sixteenth century.[126] There is no entry for Stone in Domesday Book, which, once again, could mean either that it was held in free alms in 1086, or that its church was considered to be part of a nearby manor of a different name. The latter suggestion seems more likely because a

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[124] Trentham's origins are further complicated by the fact that the southern part of its parish may have been surrounded to the east and west by places dependent on Stone implying that at least part of its parish may have once belonged that that church: below, p. 276.

[125] For 'Wulfhad' and 'Ruffinus': Blair, 'A Handlist', p. 561. For Bede: B. Colgrave & R.A.B. Mynors (eds), *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 383 [Book iv, Ch. 16]; A.R. Rumble, '*Ad Lapidem* in Bede and a Mercian Martyrdom', in *idem* & A.D. Mills (eds), *Names, Places and People: An Onomastic Miscellany in Memory of John McNeal Dodgson* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1997), pp. 310-15 & 318-19. The current structure of what was, historically, Stone's parish church dates only from 1753-58: Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 267; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 52.

[126] Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 411 & 424. For the sixteenth-century situation: Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 260.

priest is recorded in the Domesday entry for Walton, whose township was adjacent to that of Stone.[127]

There are signs that Stone's parish may have once extended well north and west of the area it covered in the nineteenth century. We have seen, for instance, that Checkley and its dependency at Cheadle may once have belonged to Stone.[128] Furthermore, Dilhorne and Milwich, located seven miles north-east and four miles south-east of Stone respectively, were given to its Priory in the twelfth century.[129] Given the proximity of Milwich to Stone (and considering that Dilhorne was sandwiched between areas that can be shown to have been dependent on Stone and Checkley) it seems possible that these gifts were also confirmations or re-grants of Stone's original possessions; alternatively, however, there may have been no earlier connection with Stone, and these gifts may be nothing more than grants made to Stone Priory in the late Middle Ages.[130]

There are reasons for thinking that Sandon too had once belonged to Stone, although no direct evidence of such a connection survives. Sandon church is located approximately four miles south-east of Stone, 'sandwiched' between areas that can shown to have been dependent on either Stafford or Stone. It was surrounded on two sides by places that were part of Stone's parish, such that Sandon looks like it may have been carved out of a land-unit focused on Stone. In the nineteenth century there

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[127] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 11,8. R.W. Eyton argues that in 1086 'Stone' would have been 'only a parcel of dedicated ground, containing a Church and perhaps a hermitage, perhaps a nunnery, all within the then reputed Manor of Walton': Eyton, 'Staffordshire Chartulary', p. 200. The name 'Stone' first occurs in the mid- twelfth century: Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 513. For the reasons why a small community of nuns has been proposed at Stone in the late eleventh century: Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs III.*, p. 240.

[128] Above, p. 260.

[129] For Dilhorne: G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Extracts from the Plea Rolls, AD 1272 to AD 1294', pp. 19-20; For Milwich: Eyton (ed.), 'The Staffordshire Chartulary', pp. 217-18.

[130] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 70.

was also a small detached 'island' of Sandon within the Stone township of Aston.[131] The fact that the boundary between its parish and areas which can be shown to have been dependent on Stafford in the late Middle Ages followed the River Trent provides further grounds for thinking that Sandon once belonged to Stone rather than Stafford, since elsewhere the river seems to have marked the eastern limits of Stafford's parish.

Swynnerton too, situated three miles north-west of Stone, may also once have belonged to it.[132] We have already seen that an Augustinian priory had been founded within Stone's parish church by the mid twelfth century. In 1152x59 Swynnerton church was at the centre of a dispute superficially between the priory and Osbern and Osbern, who were said to be clerks of Swynnerton. The proximity of Swynnerton to Stone raises the possibility that the priory's interest in that church stemmed from its having been granted to the priory as a dependency of Stone's parish church (that is to say, Swynnerton's location reasonably suggests that it could have been within Stone's parish, especially considering that it shows no links with any other high-status church nearby). Although the precise nature of the dispute is not specified, the document ended with the clerks recognising that '*ecclesiam de Swinn(wrtona) de iure capellarie spectare ad ecclesiam de Stan*" ('the church of Swynnerton looked to the church of Stone by right of being a chapel'). They also swore to pay an annual pension of two shillings '*ecclesie de Stan' tanquam matrici ecclesie*' ('to the church of Stone just as to a mother-church'), and Bishop Durdent gave his consent to this, confirming the church of Swynnerton to Stone as a chapel in perpetuity.[133]

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[131] LRO B/A/15 Tithe Maps for Aston (1845) and Sandon (1844); Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, pp. 122 & 172; Edwards, 'Stafford', p. 74.

[132] *Taxatio*, p. 242.

[133] The full text of the relevant sections of the document says: '*Quod videlicet predicti clerici recognoverunt ecclesiam de Swinn(wrtona) de iure capellarie spectare ad ecclesiam de Stan'; et tactis sacrosanctis, presente Roberto domino fundi et consentiente, iuraverunt quod annuatim ecclesie de Stan' tanquam matrici ecclesie ad festum sancti Ulfadi duos solidos nominee pensionis persolverunt . . . ecclesiam de Swinn(wrtona), cum omnibus pertinentiis suis, ecclesie de Stan' tamquam capellam episcopali auctoritate in perpetuum confirmamus*': Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, no. 72, p. 71. Also:

Swynnerton's original status turns on what the document has in mind when it talks on two occasions about an *ecclesia* at Stone. It is normally assumed that the document refers only to Stone Priory, and Swynnerton's annual payment of two shillings was certainly intended for that institution because, according to the Taxatio and Valor, Swynnerton made a payment to the priory in 1291 and 1535. It seems therefore that one purpose of the document was to establish that from then on the priory would act *as if it were* ('*tanquam*') Swynnerton's mother-church.[134] Yet in this case, where was Swynnerton's mother-church prior to this judgment? Considering that the priory would *from now on* act as if it were Swynnerton's mother-church, it seems likely that when the document says that 'the church of Swynnerton looked to the church of Stone by right of being a chapel', it is referring to Stone parish church rather than to the priory. That is to say, the dispute lying behind the document could have worked in the following way. When Stone's parish church was appropriated to the priory, so too was the income St Wulfhad's customarily received from its dependencies. But for some reason the priory did not receive some (or all) of what it was owed by Swynnerton, with these payments perhaps being retained by St Wulfhad's. In this case, rather than the document merely recording a straightforward dispute between Swynnerton church and Stone Priory, it may instead record the settlement of a much more complex dispute between St Wulfhad's and the priory over the income from Swynnerton. The purpose of the document may, then, have been to remind all the parties concerned that Stone Priory, not St Wulfhad's, was now

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Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 241; G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'The Staffordshire Chartulary, Series III. of Ancient Deeds', *SHC*, 3.1 (1882), pp. 185-86.

[134] For the payment in 1291 and 1535: *Taxatio*, p. 242; *Valor*, p. 121. For further discussion of the document: Dickinson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 241; Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, no. 72, pp. 71-72; also: Wrottesley (ed.), 'Staffordshire Chartulary', pp. 185-86.

Swynnerton's mother-church (i.e. that it, rather than the parish church, was entitled to Swynnerton's income).[135]

Such a situation would further complicate Trentham's position. The narrow parish of Swynnerton wraps itself around the west side of Trentham's parish, as do Stone's townships of Moddershall and Normacot on the east. Thus, were Swynnerton originally dependent on Stone, then the latter's reconstructed mother-church parish would surround Trentham in a proprietorial manner – raising the possibility that part of the area dependent on Trentham had once belonged to Stone. But this could all amount to nothing, not least because the evidence for Swynnerton's former dependence on Stone is merely circumstantial, and because no other links between Stone and Trentham have come to light.

7.4.3 Wolstanton

Domesday Book records the presence of a priest at Wolstanton, situated around three miles north-west of Stoke and five north of Trentham.[136] Wolstanton was of high-status in the late Middle Ages, being valued, along with its unnamed chapels, at £26 13s 4d at the end of the thirteenth century. A few years later it was said once again to have a chapel, but the name of that chapel either was not included in the document in question, or else is no longer legible.[137] Consequently, our information regarding Wolstanton's chapels comes from modern sources.

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[135] This dispute is also discussed in M.J. Edwards, 'The Anglo-Saxon Origins of Stafford and its Churches' (unpublished University of Birmingham MPhil thesis, 2005), p. 74, and Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 69. Neither, however, enter into the complexities outlined above. Jenkins argues that the clerks at Swynnerton 'may have been the successors of clerks from the minster church [at Stone] sent out to serve an outlying chapel'. J.C. Wedgwood suggests that Swynnerton was once dependent on Stone, but does not explain the basis of his view: Wedgwood, 'Early Staffordshire History', pp. 192 & 195.

[136] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,15.

[137] Wedgwood (ed.), 'Inquisitions', p. 246.

In 1563, for instance, Wolstanton was said to have an annexed chapel at Keele, the latter place being described once again as a church annexed to Wolstanton in 1604; Keele became a separate parish in 1774. Chapels were also mentioned at Kidsgrove (in the Wolstanton township of Brierley Hurst) and Thursfield (likewise a township in Wolstanton parish) in 1552 and 1553 respectively.[138] In the nineteenth-century the parish was still extensive, and comprised the townships of Brierley Hurst, Chatterley, Chell, Chesterton, Knutton, Oldcote, Ravenscliffe, Thursfield, Tunstall and Wolstanton.[139] Considering its proximity to Stoke and Trentham, and bearing in mind that Wolstanton was only six miles away from the important Cheshire church of Barthomley, it seems unlikely that all four churches were of equal status. Unfortunately, no connections between Wolstanton and these nearby churches which shed light on their relative status have been found. But given Wolstanton's relative obscurity, and the fact that its parish incorporated much land of a relatively poor quality, it seems likely that Wolstanton was a parochial chapel in origin, but was able to break away from its mother-church sufficiently successfully for no signs of its former dependence to have survived into the late Middle Ages.[140]

7.5 Staffordshire's early parochial geography: (iii) Central-West

The situation in Central Staffordshire is more straightforward than in much of the north of the shire, and is reminiscent of the early parochial geography mapped in many other parts of the West Midlands.[141] It has been seen that this contrast may be

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[138] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 317-18. For Keele parish: Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 414 & 429.

[139] Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, pp. 215-30.

[140] Tim Cockin has argued that had Wolstanton been carved out of Stoke's parish, this would explain why Whitmore was detached from the latter church: we have already seen, however, that Whitmore may originally have been dependent on Trentham rather than Stoke: *ibid.*, p. 49; above p. 271. It is not clear whether Trentham Priory's holding a holy well and hermitage in Wolstanton parish throws any light on the latter church's origins.

[141] For examples of published studies: above, p. 239, n. 8.

explained by the fact that large parts of North Staffordshire are agriculturally marginal, and so may well have lain outside the regular territorial framework in existence elsewhere. Conversely, the shire's central belt is characterised by better quality land, consisting mainly of an undulating plain at around 350 feet above sea level and fertile soils (although there are pockets of higher ground and poorer soils in the vicinity of Cannock Chase).[142] Indeed, many churches in this part of the shire, particularly those which were royal free chapels in the late Middle Ages, were relatively successful at retaining control over their possessions, which means that we are able to reconstruct this area's early parochial geography relatively fully.[143]

Once again, there is very little evidence of Staffordshire parishes crossing into neighbouring shires (and vice versa). Shifnal, for instance, situated around five miles west of the Staffordshire-Shropshire boundary, had a number of dependencies located mainly in Shropshire.[144] Dawley church was recognised as its chapelry of Shifnal in 1256, and the pensions paid by the incumbents of Kemberton and Ryton churches to Shifnal were, in the words of Jane Croom, 'probably in acknowledgment of their former position as chapelries of St Andrew's'. Croom argues that place-name evidence indicates that Sutton Maddock may also have been part of this parish, since the south *tūn* 'presumably describes the settlement's location in relation to the estate

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[142] For further discussion: Chapter 1.2, p. 4.

[143] The term 'royal free chapel' began to be used with increasing frequency throughout the thirteenth century to describe a small group of high-status churches, royally owned, which enjoyed independence from episcopal jurisdiction while still retaining a pastoral role. This independence was contested from the thirteenth century onwards. For further discussion: J.H. Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels 1100-1300: A Constitutional Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), particularly pp. 1-22; *idem*, 'Royal Supremacy in Ancient Demesne Churches', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 22 (1971), pp. 289-302. Anne Jenkins has argued that most of Staffordshire's royal free chapels were founded in the seventh century. She also suggests that the existence of a significant cluster of such churches in the probable original heartland of the Mercian kingdom indicates that these foundations may have been the earliest family churches of the Mercian royal family: Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 184-87.

[144] J.N. Croom, 'The Fragmentation of the Minster *Parochiae* of South-East Shropshire', in Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches*, p. 74.

centre in the north' (i.e. at Shifnal).[145] All of these places were in Shropshire in 1086 and are illustrated on Map 26. Citing the opinion of Eyton, Croom also says that Sheriff Hales and Stirchley similarly seem to have been chapels of Shifnal (although Eyton does not make the basis of his opinion clear.)[146]

We have already seen that Sheriff Hales was in Staffordshire in 1086, and so Shifnal seems to be a rare example in this area of a high-status church whose parish was divided between two shires.[147] Nevertheless, since it has not been possible to assign Tong, Boscobel, Donnington, Albrighton, Bonninghall, Beckbury, Badger and Stockton, which lie between areas apparently dependent on Shifnal and the Staffordshire-Shropshire boundary, to any high-status church, we have to keep in mind the possibility that they too had once been dependent on a church of superior status in Staffordshire.

7.5.1 Eccleshall

Place-name evidence indicates that Eccleshall may have been the site of a pre-Anglo-Saxon church. Eccleshall's name is one of a number in England derived from Old English **ecles*, a borrowing from the Primitive Welsh ancestor of Modern Welsh *eglwys*, meaning 'a body of Christians, a church', and from Old English *halh*, meaning 'sheltered place'.[148] Margaret Gelling has argued that **ecles* is an extremely

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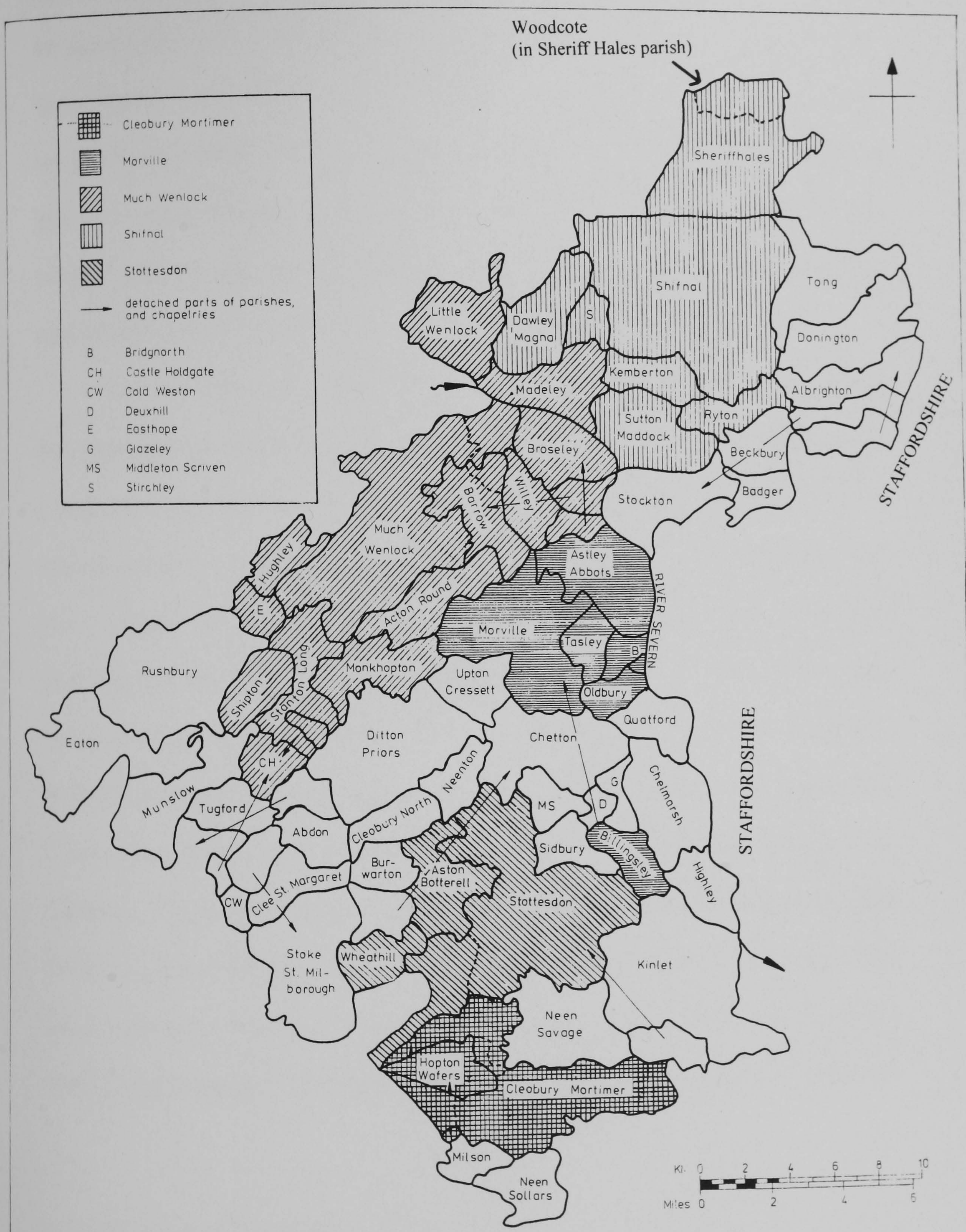
[145] *Ibid.*, p. 74.
[146] *Ibid.*; R.W. Eyton, *The Antiquities of Shropshire Volume II* (London: John Russell Smith, 1859), p. 330; *idem*, *Antiquities VIII*, p. 123.
[147] DB, ff. 246 & 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, B4 & 8,5. It has been argued that part of the manor had been transferred to Shropshire, probably at the behest of the Montgomery family by 1102: Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Shrops.*, n. for ES1,6. The partial transfer of lands belonging to Sheriff Hales was reflected in the nineteenth-century parochial geography of the area, when the ecclesiastical parish of Sheriff Hales was divided between Staffordshire and Shropshire (the majority of the parish falling into Shropshire). The remainder of Sheriff Hales was transferred to Shropshire in 1895: Chapter 4.3.6, p. 115, n. 60.
[148] M. Gelling, *Signposts to the Past: Place-Names and the History of England* (London: Book Club Associates, 1978), pp. 96-97; Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 243; Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 207.



Map 26: Parishes in Central-East Shropshire that neighbour Staffordshire

Source: J.N. Croom, 'The Fragmentation of the Minster *Parochiae* of South-East Shropshire', in J. Blair (ed.), *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition 950-1200* (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1988), p. 69, with additions

significant place-name element since it shows that churches continued to function in the post-Roman period, and were 'recognized and respected by the pagan Anglo-Saxon settlers'. The word is used as a simplex name, or as the first element of compound names with a limited range of second elements. 'The fact that it was not used as a second element', says Gelling, 'means that the Anglo-Saxons never felt moved to bestow a distinguishing name on one of these churches, but they sometimes used the church as a defining feature when naming something else'.[149]

Yet even if there was a church at Eccleshall when Germanic-speaking peoples first settled the area, its name does not, by itself, prove the continuous existence of a church there from that time onwards. Nevertheless, the presence of fragments of pre-Norman crosses in the fabric of the current church of Holy Trinity shows that there was a church on the present site in the late Anglo-Saxon period.[150] Indeed, Eccleshall's church was of exceptional status in the late Middle Ages, since it was valued at £66 13s 4d in 1291 (the highest annual income of any church in Staffordshire at the time), and, most importantly, it retained mother-church rights over a very wide parish into the nineteenth century, at which time it comprised 20 townships. These are Aspley, Bromley, Broughton, Charnes, Chatcull, Chapel Chorlton and Hill Chorlton, Cold Meece, Cotes, Croxton, Eccleshall, Horseley, Mill Meece, Pershall, Podmore, Slindon, Sugnall Magna, Sugnall Parva, Three Farms, Walton and Wootton.[151] Of these townships, a chapel was recorded at Chorlton in

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[149] Gelling, *Signposts*, p. 96.

[150] Pape, 'Rectangular-Shafted Pre-Norman Crosses', pp. 32-35. Sidebottom lists the fragments as either built into the pre-Victorian church fabric or if not *in situ*, found by reliable archaeological means to have been reasonably associated with the establishment: Sidebottom, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture', p. 149.

[151] *Taxatio*, p. 243. Discussing the pre- teneth-century situation in Staffordshire, John Blair has commented that 'with its British ecclesiastical place-name and huge mother-church parish [Eccleshall] looks like a striking case of continuity': Blair, *The Church*, p. 309.

1268, over which Eccleshall claimed the right of presentation; at Charnes in 1553; and at Broughton in 1633.[152] The locations of these places are illustrated on Map 27.

Topographical evidence implies that other places had belonged to Eccleshall too. The parish of Standon is surrounded on three sides by places that were still within Eccleshall's parish in the nineteenth century, implying that it had been carved out of that area.[153] The same is possibly true for Maer, since it is surrounded to the west and north by areas dependent on Eccleshall. Ecclesiastical and manorial links suggest that at least parts of Adbaston's nineteenth-century parish had once belonged to Eccleshall too. In the nineteenth century Bishop Offley and Tunstall, which lie immediately south of the area which can shown to have been dependent on Eccleshall, were township's within Adbaston's parish. But earlier evidence suggests that they had once been dependent on Eccleshall, since in the mid sixteenth century Eccleshall church was said to have chapels at these two places, and Bishop's Offley belonged manorially to Eccleshall in 1086.[154] There is less direct evidence that Adbaston itself was once part of a land-unit focused ecclesiastically on Eccleshall, but the fact that Adbastan was a member of Sugnall manor in 1086, the latter place certainly part of Eccleshall's parish, indicates that it may well have been.[155] Manorial links also suggest that Flashbrook, another of Adbaston's townships in the nineteenth century, may once have been dependent on Eccleshall, since it was a member of Bishop Offley manor (which, we have seen, belonged to Eccleshall at the time of Domesday Book).[156] If these places were all part of Eccleshall's parish, it would suggest that

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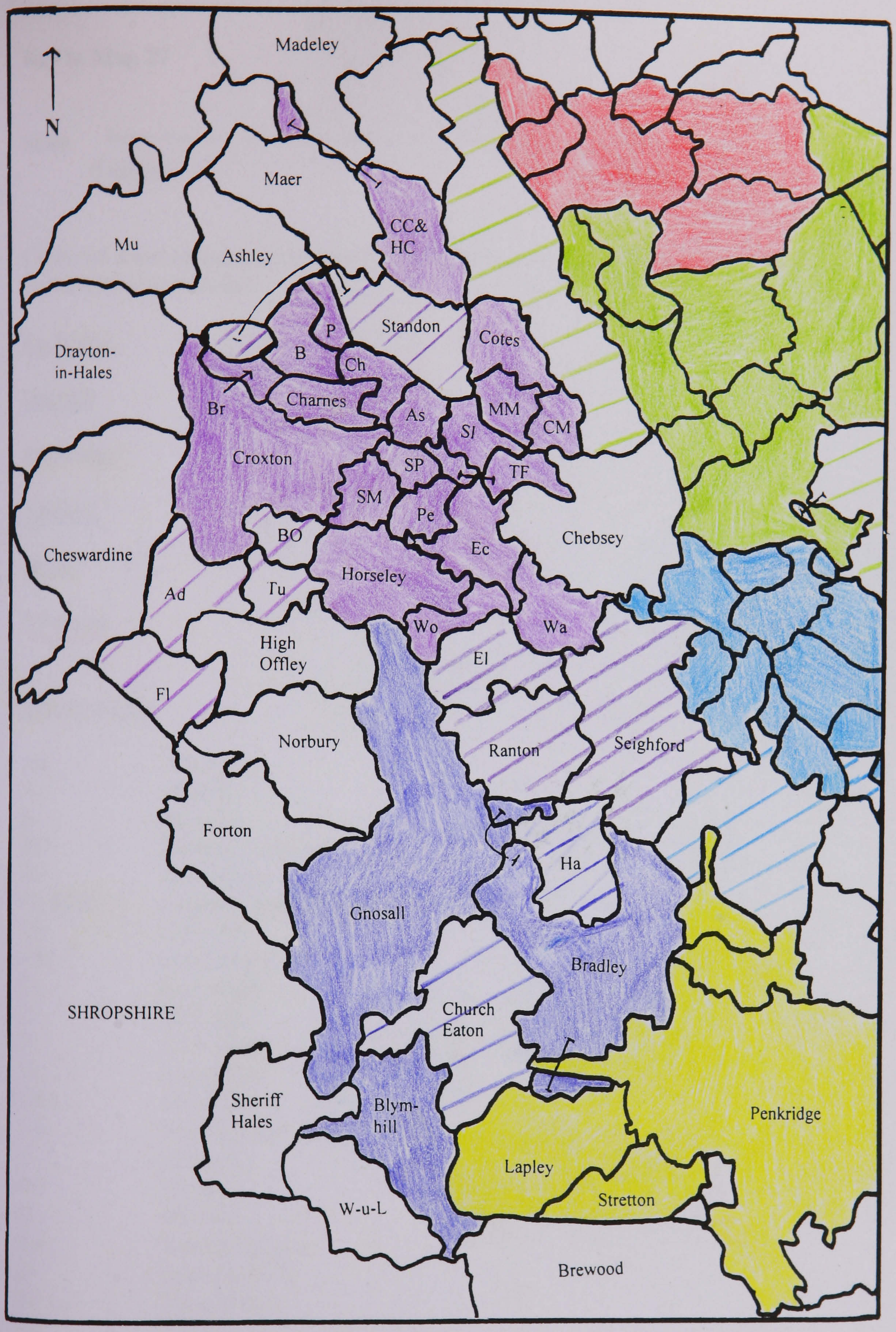
[152] For Chorlton: F. Parker (ed.), 'Chetwynd's History of Pirehill Hundred, with Notes (continued)', *SHC*, 1914, p. 37; for Broughton and Charnes: Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 89.
[153] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 67.
[154] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (ed.), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,11; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 65.
[155] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,20.
[156] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs*, 2,11.



Map 27: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: central-west
Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

Key to Map 27

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Eccleshall

Gnosall

Penkridge

Stafford

Stone

Trentham

Abbreviations

Ad	Adbaston
As	Aspley
B	Bromley
BO	Bishop's Offley
Br	Broughton
CC&HC	Chapel Chorlton and Hill Chorlton
Ch	Chatcull
CM	Cold Meece
Ec	Eccleshall
El	Ellenhall
Fl	Flashbrook
Ha	Haughton
MM	Mill Meece
Mu	Mucklestone
P	Podmore
Pe	Pershall
Sl	Slindon
SM	Sugnall Magna
SP	Sugnall Parva
TF	Three Farms
Tu	Tunstall
Wa	Walton
Wo	Wootton
W-u-L	Weston-under-Lizard

High Offley would have been too, since it would have been surrounded by places dependent on Eccleshall on three sides.

Anne Jenkins has argued that a number of (sometimes indirect) secular and ecclesiastical links between Eccleshall and Seighford, Ranton and Ellenhall, the latter three places comprising a block of land directly south of the Eccleshall townships of Walton and Wootton, imply that they may once been dependent on Eccleshall's church too. If so, then Eccleshall's original parish would have been exceptionally large. In the twelfth century a priory was founded at Ranton, which was endowed with the church of Seighford and its dependent chapels of Ranton, Ellenhall and Derrington (the latter place part if Seighford's parish until 1847).[157] While Ranton and Ellenhall are not listed as separate benefices by the Taxatio, they formed their own parishes by the mid sixteenth century; Derrington, however, remained a chapel of Seighford until a separate parish was created for it in the mid nineteenth century.[158] In 1086 Seighford, belonged to Eccleshall manor, suggesting that it may once have been part of Eccleshall's parish. Ellenhall was also listed a member of Sugnall manor at the time, the latter manor being part of Eccleshall's nineteenth-century parish.[159]

It has not been possible to assign Chebsey, which sits between the areas dependent parochially on Eccleshall, Stafford and Stone, to any high-status church. Chebsey's church was itself of higher-than-usual status: its churchyard contains the remains of a late Anglo-Saxon cross, and a priest is recorded at Chebsey by Domesday Book. Its position in relation to Eccleshall, Stafford and Stone, combined with the fact that Chebsey has no known dependencies, makes it seem likely that it was a parochial chapel in origin, which broke away from its mother-church without

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[157] Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum Volume VI Pt I*, p. 258; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 66; Youngs, *Guide*, p. 409.
[158] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 97-98 & 218-19; Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 409 & 421.
[159] In the form of the townships of Sugnall Magna and Sugnall Parva; DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs*, 2,20 & 2,21; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 66.

leaving any trace of its formerly subordinate position.[160] In the late twelfth century Richard Peche, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, confirmed that Chebsey should be free from synodals and all other customs and charges.[161] This, argues Anne Jenkins, suggests that Chebsey was related to Lichfield, and perhaps therefore, to Eccleshall too, since it was a prebend of Lichfield church.[162] But Peche may have had no special interest in Chebsey, i.e. beyond that which, as bishop, he would have for any church in his diocese, and so the location of Chebsey's mother-church must remain uncertain.

7.5.2 Stafford

There was a high-status collegiate church at Stafford in 1086 at which time Domesday Book records that the priests of Stafford's borough held 14 dwellings there, and that 13 prebendary canons at Stafford held three hides from the king in (free) alms.[163] Stafford's church seems to have consisted of two connected yet separate institutions: St Mary's (a collegiate minster and royal free chapel in the late medieval period, carrying an extremely high value of over £58 in 1291), and St Bertelin's, which lay immediately west of St Mary's and on the same alignment.[164] While the latter's association with an Anglo-Saxon local saint reinforces our impression of Stafford church's superior status, it nevertheless throws little direct light on the date of that church's origins: that is to say, whether St Mary's/St Bertelin's originated in the middle Anglo-Saxon period or was founded, or enhanced, following Stafford's being

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[160] Pape, 'Round-Shafted Pre-Norman Crosses', pp. 31-34; Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 99; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 24. Sidebottom lists the cross as having a long-standing and reliably recorded presence in the churchyard with no known previous provenance': Sidebottom, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Scuplture', p. 149. DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 10,9.

[161] H.E. Savage (ed.), *The Great Register of Lichfield Cathedral known as Magnum Registrum Album*, (SHC, 1924), no. 246, p. 116. Chebsey's grant of freedom from episcopal dues and other customs was similar to those made to Burton, Rocester, Stone and Trentham: above p. 257, n. 68.

[162] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 66.

[163] DB, ff. 246 & 247; Hawkins and Rumble (ed.), *DB: Staffs.*, B10 & 6,1.

[164] *Taxatio*, p. 242. For St Mary's status as a royal free chapel: Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, pp. 70 & 97-102. For further discussion of the complex and unusual relationship between St Mary's and St Bertelin's: Edwards, 'Stafford', pp. 34-36.

provided with defences in 913 is an open question.[165] Indeed, we cannot prove that Bertelin's cult was associated with Stafford before the twelfth century, when the Peterborough chronicler, Hugh Candidus, listed it as his resting-place.[166]

The eastern limits of Stafford's extended parish were marked by the River Trent. It still comprised nine townships in the mid nineteenth-century: Coton, Herberton, Hopton, Marston, Salt and Enson, Tillington, Whitgreave, Worston and Yarlet. These places are illustrated on Map 28. Chapels had been established in some of these townships by the sixteenth century: in 1553 it was recorded that Salt had formerly belonged to Stafford's collegiate church (i.e. St Mary's), which paid the salary of the priest there; the same was said of chapels at Enson and Whitgreave in 1563. St Mary's had responsibility for the right of presentation at Hopton in the late thirteenth century.[167] Creswell (located immediately north-west of Stafford's nineteenth-century parish), Tixall and Ingestre too (both situated to the east) seem once to have been dependent on Stafford too, since in 1428 all three were at the centre of a complex and unusual dispute between St Mary's and St Bertelin's over which church had the right of burial of their parishioners. Although still called *capellae* at the time, Tixall and Ingestre were independent parishes by the mid sixteenth century.[168] Stafford's parish probably also once included the small extra-parochial area of St Thomas's Priory, which was surrounded on three sides by places dependent on Stafford. Castle Church seems to have once been dependent on Stafford too, since

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[165] ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 913; S. Taylor (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume IV: MS B* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B.*], p. 50; K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume V: MS. C* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), p. 75 [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C.*]; D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents Volume I* c. *500-1042* (London: Eyre Methuen, 2nd edn, 1979) [hereafter *EHD I*], p. 212.

[166] Blair, 'A Handlist', pp. 515-16.

[167] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 98, 223-24 & 315; Wrottesley (ed.), 'Extracts from the Plea Rolls, AD 1272 to AD 1294', p. 225; also: Edwards, 'Stafford', pp. 53-54.

[168] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 132 & 289; *Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids Volume V: Stafford-Worcester* (London: HMSO, 1908), pp. 19-20. For further discussion: Edwards, 'Stafford', pp. 34-35 & 54-55.

in 1252 it was at the centre of a dispute between St Mary's and Kenilworth Priory (Warwickshire), which ended in a judgment that Castle Church had belonged to Stafford since the Norman Conquest.[169] In the mid sixteenth century the burial rights of Castle Church were still held by Stafford. Nevertheless, Castle Church cannot be assigned to Stafford's original parish with as much confidence as Creswell, Tixall or Ingestre: the dispute with Kenilworth records only that it had belonged to Stafford *since* the Norman Conquest, and Castle Church's position south of the River Sow is unique amongst Stafford's known dependencies.[170]

7.5.3 Penkridge

In the late Middle Ages Penkridge was alleged to have been founded by either King Edgar (959-75) or Eadred (946-55), although there is nothing to substantiate either of these stories.[171] Nevertheless, these legends could be indicative of pre-Conquest royal patronage of Penkridge's church: the church clearly enjoyed such patronage in the late Middle Ages when it was a royal free chapel. It showed other signs of superior status at that time, still, for instance, being collegiate in 1291, when it also had a high annual value of £44 13s 4d.[172] Domesday Book records that nine canons held one hide of land from the king in Penkridge in 1086, but it is unclear where these canons were based: the entry in question follows a number concerning the Canons of Wolverhampton's holdings, and is therefore often thought to relate to that church. Yet

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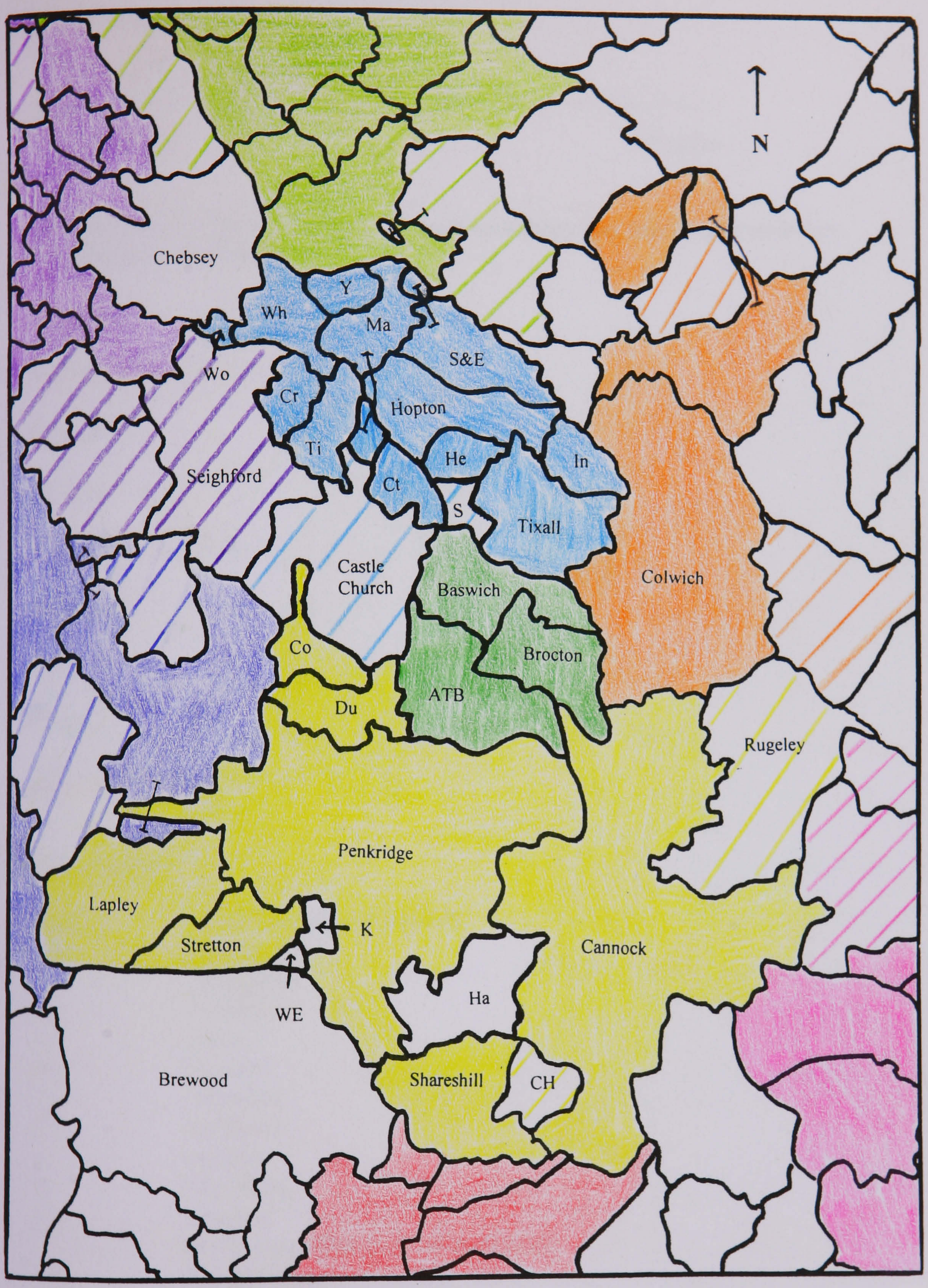
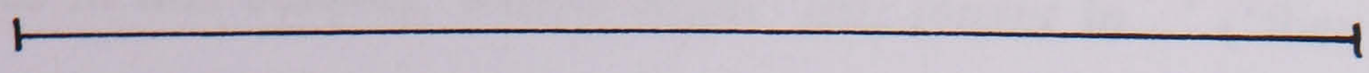
[169] G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Plea Rolls *temp.* Henry III: Suits Affecting Staffordshire Tenants taken from the Plea Rolls of the Reign of Henry III., and Abstracted into English', *SHC 4.1* (1883), pp. 112-13.
[170] It has not, however, been possible to assign Baswich, which probably originated as a parochial chapel and which was situated directly south of Stafford on the southern banks of the Sow, to any other high-status church and so it may too have once been dependent on St Mary's. For Baswich: below, pp. 289-90.For Castle Church: L.M. Midgley & B. Donaldson in L.M. Midgley (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume V* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) [hereafter *VCH Staffs V*], p. 95. For further discussion of the extent of Stafford's parish: Edwards, 'Stafford', pp. 52-66; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 38-42.
[171] D. Styles, 'The Early History of Penkridge Church', *SHC*, 1950-51, p. 3.
[172] *Taxatio*, p. 242. For Penkridge's status as a royal free chapel: Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, pp. 70 & 95-97.



Map 28: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: Baswich, Penkridge and Stafford.
Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

Key to Map 28

Scale 

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Baswich

Colwich-and-Stowe

Eccleshall

Gnosall

Lichfield, St Michael

Penkridge

Stafford

Stone

Wolverhampton

Abbreviations

ATB	Acton Trussell and Bednall
CH	Cheslyn Hay
Co	Coppenhall
Cr	Creswell
Ct	Coton
Du	Dunston
Ha	Hatherton
He	Herberton
In	Ingestre
K	Kinvaston
Ma	Marston
S	St Thomas's Priory (extra parochial)
S&E	Salt and Enson
Ti	Tillington
WE	Water Eaton
Wh	Whitgreave
Wo	Worston
Y	Yarlet

the Domesday scribe used a different format for Penkridge's entry than for most of the entries in this chapter, which begin '*ipsi tenent in...*' ('they [i..e. the Canons of Wolverhampton] hold themselves in...'). Penkridge's, however, begins '*in PANCRIZ tenent ix clerici de Rege I hid*" ('in Penkridge nine clerics hold one hide from the king'). This very probably indicates that the nine canons were based at a different church from those recorded in the preceding entry, in which case Penkridge's entry probably means 'in Penkridge nine canons *of Penkridge church* hold one hide from the king'.[173]

Penkridge had seven prebends at the end of the thirteenth century: at Coppenhall, Stretton, Shareshill, Dunston, Penkridge, Congreve and Longbridge, some of these places still part of the large nineteenth-century parish shown on Map 28.[174] The churches of Cannock and (probably also) Rugeley, located to the east of Penkridge, appear to have once been dependent on it too. At some point between 1189 and 1198 these two churches were granted in perpetuity to the common funds of the canons of Lichfield, except for a payment of four shillings said to be due by custom to Penkridge.[175] The latter church contested the grant until 1207, when a papal commission decided that Lichfield should pay one mark annually to Penkridge and

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[173] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs*, 7,17. The next entry, the final in the chapter, also departs from the standard format used in Wolverhampton's chapter, recording that '*ipsi clerici tenant ii hid' 7 iii virg' t're in GENESHALE*' ('the clerics held two hides and three virgates of land themselves at Gnosall'). If the clergy mentioned in the entry for Penkridge were based at Wolverhampton church, then so too, presumably, were the ones recorded as holding land at Gnosall; but if the canons holding one hide from the king at Penkridge were from Penkridge church, then the Domesday scribe perhaps meant to tell us they also held land at Gnosall (i.e. the canons of Penkridge held one hide *from the king* in that place, but two hides and three virgates *in their own right* at Gnosall). Such a situation might be the relic of an earlier connection between Penkridge and Gnosall churches: that is to say, if Gnosall were part of the Penkridge canons' landed endowment, then it might imply that it was founded on land originally in Penkridge's parish. Alternatively, however, the canons mentioned in Gnosall's entry could relate to Gnosall church.

[174] *Taxatio*, p. 242.

[175] Franklin (ed.), *EEA XVII*, no. 35, pp. 31-33; Styles, 'The Early History', pp. 8-9. A similar payment in respect of Cannock is recorded in *c.* 1255 at which time the churches were also said to belong to Lichfield: S. Shaw, *The History & Antiquities of Staffordshire Volume I: Introduction by M.W. Greenslade & G.C. Baugh* (Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1976 [originally published 1798-1801]), p. xviii.

that Cannock's parishoners should be buried there. The dispute seems to locate Cannock firmly in Penkridge's parish, but since the judgment of 1207 does not mention Rugeley (with the late twelfth-century grant the only evidence to link it to Penkridge) we cannot be as certain that it had belonged to Penkridge too – although Rugeley shows no links with any other superior church nearby.[176]

An inquisition into the prebends of Penkridge in 1261 recorded further that the church of Lapley used to belong to the free chapel of Penkridge, where its parishioners were buried, which strongly implies that it too had originated as a chapel of Penkridge.[177] The township of Water Eaton was perhaps once part of Penkridge's parish since it is surrounded on two sides by areas which can be shown to have been dependent on that church. The same is true of Cheslyn Hay, surrounded on all sides by places dependent on Penkridge. The same may be true of Kinvaston and Hatherton, the latter entirely surrounded by Penkridge, but both were townships of Wolverhampton parish until the mid nineteenth century. This situation may, however, arise from their having been granted to St Peter's, Wolverhampton in the late tenth century and then being parochially 'captured' by it.[178]

7.5.4 Gnosall

Although Gnosall was of superior status in the late Middle Ages, the church appears to have been less successful at protecting its rights than were Eccleshall, Penkridge or Stafford, and its original parish is therefore more difficult to reconstruct. St Lawrence at Gnosall was cruciform in the twelfth century, implying a high-status at that time, and it had a respectable annual income of £21 6s 8d at the end of the thirteenth

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[176] Edwards, 'Stafford', p. 67 following Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 27-28.
[177] Styles, 'The Early History', pp. 48-49.
[178] Youngs, *Guide*, pp. 413 & 415. For more detailed discussion of the connections between Penkridge and its subordinate churches: Edwards, 'Stafford', pp. 66-68; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 25-34. For Wulfrun's grant: Chapter 3.3.4.

century.[179] Although described as a collegiate church and royal free chapel in the late medieval period, Gnosall had been given to the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield by the mid twelfth century, and so was no longer a royal peculiar. It also never became collegiate in the strict sense, since its prebendaries were not a corporate body with a common fund and common seal under a dean or other head.[180] But while this lesser status raises the possibility that Gnosall was a sub-minster in origin, there are no solid grounds for assigning it to the parish of another nearby church.[181]

Gnosall granted the right of presentation in Blymhill, directly south-east of Gnosall, to William Bagot and his heirs in the late twelfth century in return for an annual pension of one mark from that church.[182] The fact that Gnosall held the advowson of Blymhill, and was being compensated for its loss, indicates that the latter church had probably once belonged to St Lawrence's. The same is probably true of Bradley, which lies immediately east of Gnosall and contained detached portions of the latter's parish in the nineteenth century. Bradley was granted to Stone Priory in the mid twelfth century, but the grant stipulated that this should not diminish Gnosall's rights within Bradley church. Nevertheless, Gnosall was seemingly unsuccessful in pressing its claims to that church because later in the same century Bradley was declared completely free from subjection to Gnosall.[183] Haughton was probably once part of Gnosall's parish too, since Gnosall presented to Haughton

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[179] L.M. Midgley in *eadem* (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume IV: Staffordshire Domesday and West Cuttlestone Hundred* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. IV*], pp. 129-30; Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, pp. 135-36; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, pp. 31-32; *Taxatio*, p. 243.

[180] Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, pp. 69-70. Instead of being collegiate in the strictest sense, Gnosall became a church of four portioners or rectors, often nevertheless described as prebendaries or canons, but acting similarly to any other divided rectory: L.M. Midgley in *eadem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs IV*, p. 128. For the grant to the bishop: Savage (ed.), *Magnum Registrum Album*, no. 171, p. 79.

[181] We have seen, however, that there are indirect grounds for thinking that Gnosall may once been connected to Penkridge church: above, p. 286, n. 173.

[182] K.L. Davies in Midgley (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IV*, p. 70.

[183] Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, no. 71, pp. 70-71; *idem* (ed.), *EEA XVI*, no. 99, p. 100; L.M. Midgley in *eadem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IV*, p. 86.

rectory in 1306 and the parish is surrounded on three sides by Bradley. The same is probably true of Church Eaton, which is surrounded on three sides by places dependent on Gnosall.[184] These places are illustrated on Map 27.

7.5.5 Other Churches

It has not been possible to assign the parishes of Brewood or Forton to any high-status church. Weston-under-Lizard was formerly part of Brewood parish and may have been named in relation to that place, since it was known as Weston-under-Brewood before being called Weston-under-Lizard.[185] Norbury presents a problem because Domesday Book records the presence of two priests there, usually, we have seen, an indication of superior status.[186] Nevertheless, Norbury's name (i.e. 'the northern fortified place') implies that it was formerly dependent on somewhere to the south, and in ecclesiastical terms the most likely candidate is Gnosall, situated three miles to the south-east.[187] Indeed, if Norbury did originate as a parochial chapel of a high-status church nearby, that need not have prevented it from acquiring more than one priest by the end of the eleventh century. These places are illustrated on map 27. Like Norbury, Baswich probably originated as a parochial chapel, and was able to break free from its mother-church sufficiently early as to leave no traces of its former dependent situation. There was a priest at Baswich at the time of Domesday Book,

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[184] S.A.H. Burne in Midgley (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IV*, p. 139; B. Hughs (ed.), *The Register of Walter Langton Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield 1296-1321 Volume I* (Canterbury and York Society, 91, 2001), no. 316, p. 39. For further discussion of the extent of Gnosall's parish: Edwards, 'Stafford', pp. 70-72; Jenkins (ed.), 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 34-38.

[185] Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, pp. 569-70. Weston's name means 'the west *tūn*'.

[186] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 8,10.

[187] Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 412; Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 440. Horovitz prefers the translation 'the northern manor-house' to fortified place, and says that it is unclear what place Norbury is north of. We shall see that there are many instances of places recognisable as sub-minsters having a directional place-name: below p. 313, n. 285.

and it had dependencies at Acton Trussell and Brocton in the sixteenth century.[188] Baswich and its dependencies are sandwiched between areas which can be shown to have been dependent on Penkridge and Stafford in the late Middle Ages, but show no direct links with either church.[189] Baswich and its dependencies are depicted on Map 28.

7.6 Staffordshire's early parochial geography: (iv) Central-East

Late medieval sources throw relatively little light on the early parochial geography of Central-East Staffordshire, making the reconstruction of that geography comparatively difficult. This is partly due to the influence of Burton Abbey, which enjoyed extensive late medieval secular and spiritual jurisdiction in this area, attracting many donations of both kinds. But such donations serve to obscure the earlier situation, since our sources do not always allow us to disentangle the interests of Burton church from that of the priory.[190]

Once again, however, there is little evidence of parishes traversing the boundary between Staffordshire and Derbyshire, which is mostly marked by major rivers in this area (i.e. the Dove and the Trent). In Derbyshire, south of the aforementioned Ashbourne, Longford appears to have been the focus of an extensive parish.[191] But this seems only to have been the core of a wider area, since Dawn Hadley has argued that late medieval and early modern written sources, along with

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[188] In 1086 Brocton and Bednall (which was later part of Acton Trussell parish) belonged to Baswich: DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,2 & 2,4. In 1563 Acton Trussell was recorded as being a church appropriated to the prebend of Whittington and Baswich; according to a chantry certificate of 1549, Brocton was a chapel of Baswich: Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 3 & 25.

[189] Anne Jenkins has argued that the area dependent on Baswich may once have formed part of Penkridge's parish because Bednall was described as a chapel of Cannock in 1552, the latter, we have seen, a dependency of Penkridge church: Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 31.

[190] As argued by Anne Jenkins in relation to disentangling the interests of Lichfield church from Lichfield diocese: 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 60.

[191] Comprising the townships of Alkmonton, Hungry, Betley, Hollington and Rodsley in the nineteenth century.

topographical and place-name evidence, point towards Brailsford (and its chapel of Osmaston), Shirley and their dependencies as having once been included within Longford's parish too. Barton Blount may also have once been dependent on Longford, as, perhaps, was the parish of Sutton-on-the-Hill.[192] Further south and west there was an extensive parish focused on the church at Doveridge, whose western and southern boundaries marched with the River Dove and, consequently, with the border between Derbyshire and Staffordshire. Sudbury, whose southern boundary was also marked by the Dove, appears to have been dependent on Doveridge too.[193] The Dove likewise formed the southern limits of Foston and Scropton, which was once dependent on the church at Marston-on-Dove.[194] The locations of these places are illustrated on Map 29.

Further south is Repton, whose church is located two miles east of the Staffordshire-Derbyshire border. It was of exceptional status in the Anglo-Saxon period, being, for instance, the burial place of the Merican kings Æthelbald (757) and Wiglaf (*c.* 840).[195] Repton was said to have nine chapels in the thirteenth century, including at Bretby, Foremark, Measham and Newton Solney (the latter on the Staffordshire-Derbyshire border, near Burton-upon-Trent). South of Newton Solney along the Staffordshire-Derbyshire boundary are the churches of Winshill and Stapenhill. Winshill shows no signs of superior status, nor does it show any signs of dependence on a high-status church nearby. Stapenhill, however, had chapels at

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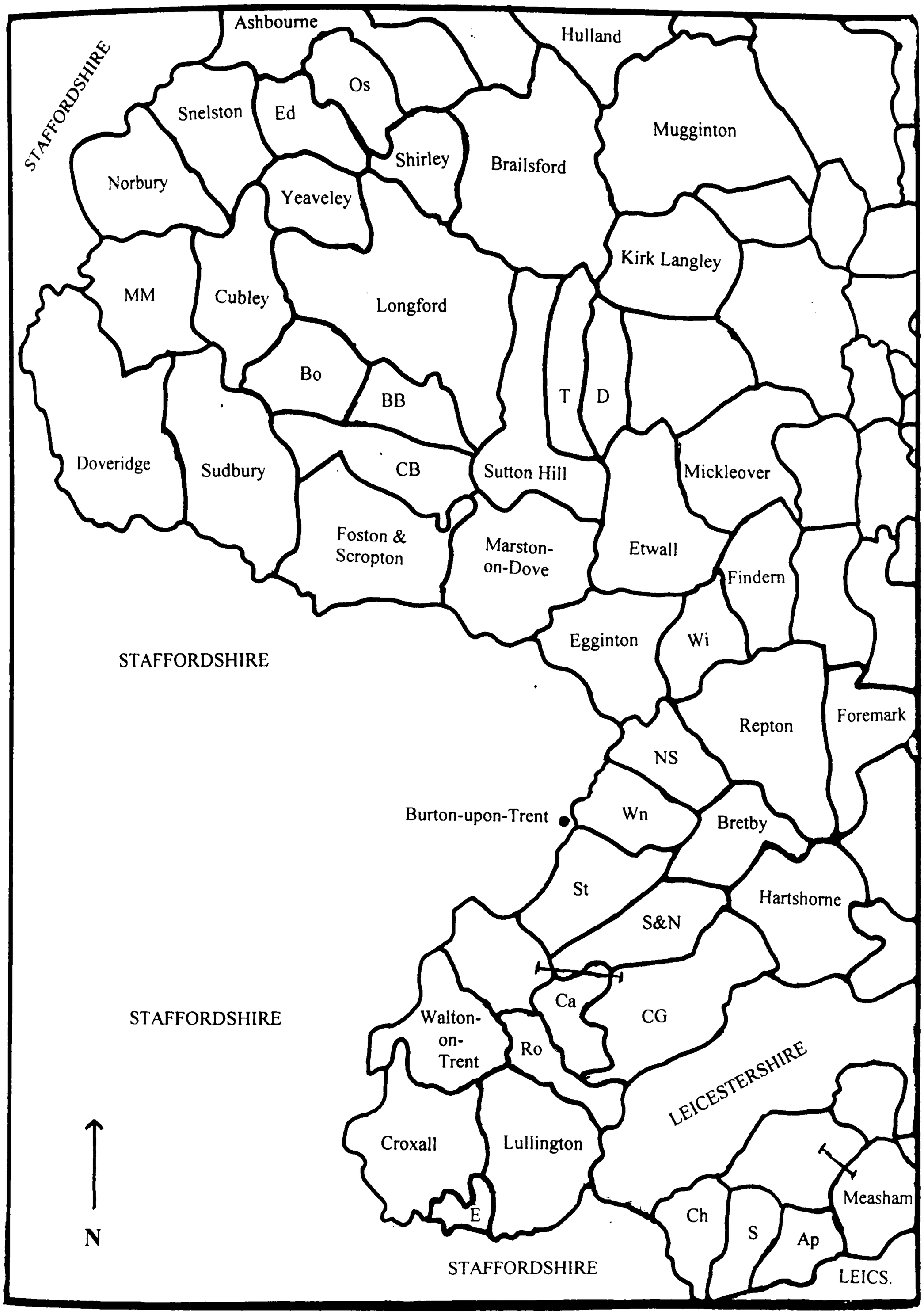
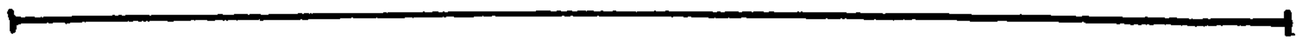
[192] Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 285-92.
[193] *Ibid.*, pp. 292-96.
[194] For further discussion of Repton church: Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*,, pp. 220-25. Hadley argues that the whole focused on Doveridge, Longford and Marston may have originally formed a single land-unit: *eadem*, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 296-97. The location of Norbury ('north fortified place') and Sudbury ('south fortified place') in the north and south of this area may offer some support to this hypothesis, but may, Hadley says, 'stretch the available evidence too far': *eadem*, *The Northern Danelaw*, pp. 135-36.
[195] B. Colgrave (ed.), *Felix's Life of St Guthlac* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 2-4 & 84-87; Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, pp. 220-21. Domesday Book records the presence of a church and two priests at Repton: DB, f. 272; Morgan (ed.), *DB: Derbys.*, 1,20.



Map 29: Parishes in South-West Derbyshire

Adapted from a Map of Derbyshire's Ecclesiastical Parishes published by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies (Canterbury, 1982)

Key to Map 29

Scale 

0 miles 10 miles

Abbreviations

Ap	Appleby
BB	Barton Blount
Bo	Boyleston
Ca	Caldwell
CB	Church Broughton
Ch	Chilcote
D	Dalbury with Lees
E	Edingale
Ed	Edlaston
MM	Marston Montgomery
NS	Newton Solney
Os	Osmaston
Ro	Rosliston
S	Stretton-en-le-Field
S&N	Stanton and Newhall
St	Stapenhill
T	Trusley
Wi	Willington
Wn	Winshill

Heathcote, Drakelow (both part of Stapenhill's parish in the nineteenth century), Caldwell, and Newhall.[196] Further south, however, the situation is more obscure. Both Lullington and Croxall, adjacent to the border with Staffordshire, had one or more dependent chapels in the late Middle Ages, respectively at Coton-in-the-Elms (a township within Lullinton parish in the nineteenth century), and at Edingale and Catton (the latter townships within Croxall parish). Neither Lullington nor Croxall, however, had any dependencies in Staffordshire, although Croxall was divided between the two shires, since another of its townships, Oakley, was part of Staffordshire.[197]

7.6.1 Colwich-and-Stowe

There are signs that a church at either Colwich or Stowe was of superior status. Although Colwich and Stowe were, strictly speaking, separate churches, in the early nineteenth century their parishes were tortuously interlocked to such an extent that they were effectively a single land-unit (although the north of the area in question generally belonged to Stowe and the south to Colwich).[198] For this reason they will be treated as a single parish – although their unusual relationship would benefit from further investigation.

There is no Domesday entry for Colwich or Stowe, but it seems likely that the priest recorded in the entry for Haywood was connected to either Colwich or Stowe church because the villages of Great and Little Haywood were later part of Colwich's

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[196] Hadley argues that Stapenhill was perhaps a daughter-church of Repton: Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 235-38. Nigel Tringham argues that Stapenhill's chapels may indicate that it had minster status: N.J. Tringham in *idem* (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume IX: Burton-upon-Trent* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2003) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. IX*], p. 215.

[197] Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 238.

[198] LRO B/A/15 Tithe Maps for Colwich (1839) and Stowe (1850). For printed versions of these maps: Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, pp. 57-58 & 184-85. The reciprocal detached parts of their parishes result from the eighteenth- to nineteenth-century formalisation of once shared tithable lands: *ibid.*, p. 50.

parish.[199] Colwich and Stowe appear in the Taxatio, and so both churches were in existence by the end of the thirteenth century, but the precise relationship between them is unclear: while Stowe's name, from OE *stōw* ('assembly-place') implies that it, rather than Colwich, was the more important centre, all the late medieval evidence points to Colwich being the higher-status church.[200] Colwich, for instance, was valued at £26 13s 4d in 1291, whereas Stowe was worth only £10 13s 4d; and Colwich, rather than Stowe, was said to have a dependent chapel in the late Middle Ages.[201]

The evidence for Colwich-and-Stowe's wider parish is limited. Fradswell can be firmly connected to it since in the 1270s demesne land and meadow of its chapel were part of the (Lichfield) prebend of Colwich. Fradswell was further said to be a chapel of ease within Colwich parish in 1563.[202] The extra-parochial area called Chartley Holme therefore appears to have been carved out of Colwich-and-Stowe's parish too, since it was bounded to the east by Fradswell and to the north and south by parts of Stowe. The name of Weston-upon-Trent, whose parish was directly west of Colwich-and-Stowe, suggests that it too may once have been dependent on either Colwich or Stowe church, although there is no direct evidence of such a connection.[203] These places are depicted on Map 30.

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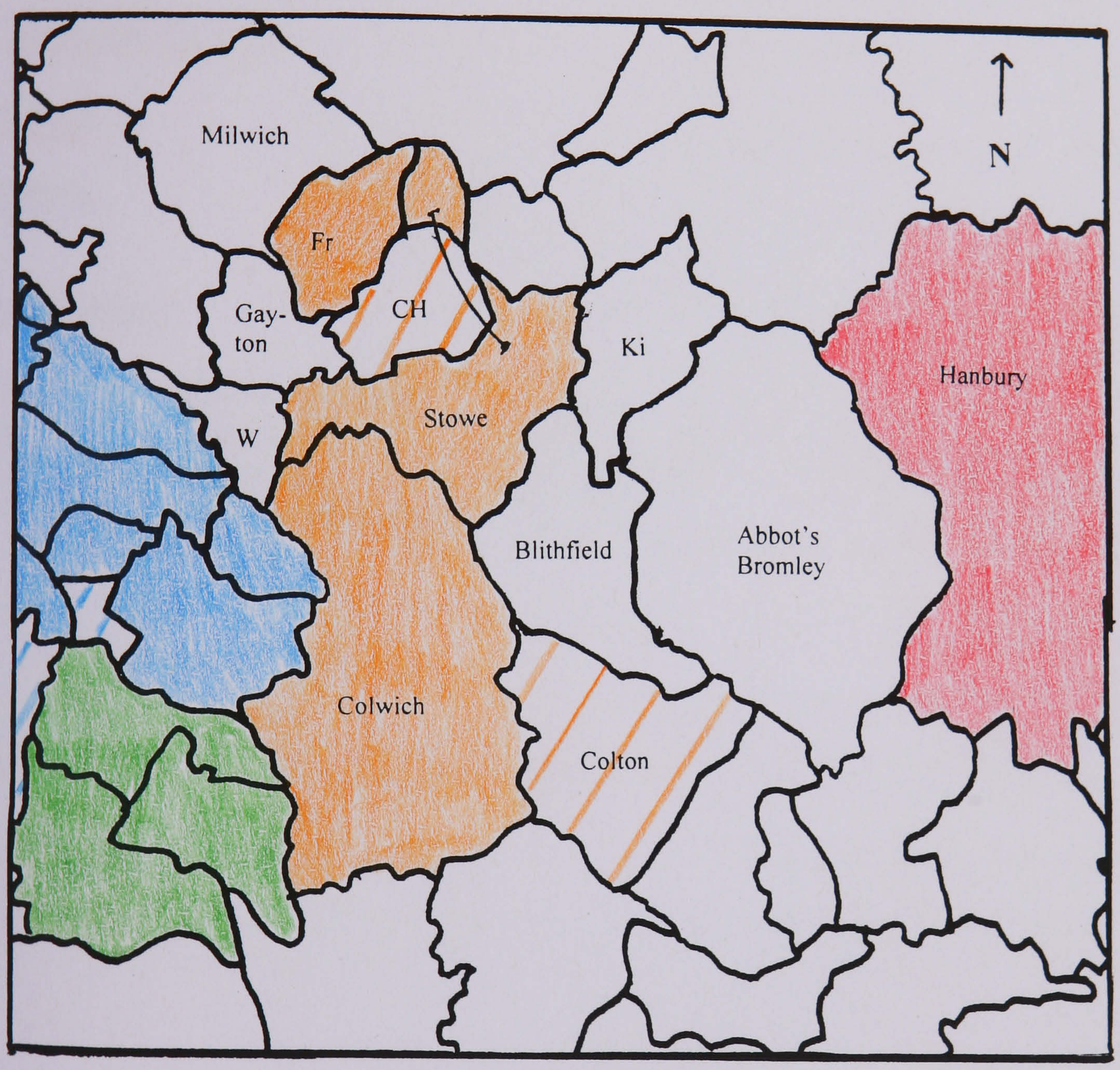
[199] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,5. Also: Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, pp. 50 & 56.

[200] Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, pp. 517-18. For discussion of the meanings of *stōw*: M. Gelling, 'Some Meanings of *Stōw*', in M. Pearce (ed.), *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland: Studies Presented to C.A. Ralegh Radford Arising from a Conference Organised in his Honour by the Devon Archaeological Society and Exeter City Museum* (British Archaeological Reports: British Series, 102, 1982), pp. 187-96.

[201] *Taxatio*, pp. 242 & 243.

[202] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 75; Savage (ed.), *Magnum Registrum Album*, no. 91, pp. 43-44. Lichfield seems to have long had an interest in this area because Domesday Book records that St Chad's cathedral held the manor of Haywood before 1066: DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs*, 2,5.

[203] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 33. Further support for this view can be found in the fact that Weston-upon-Trent is directly east to the area which can be shown to have been dependent on Stafford, but separated from that area by the River Trent, which forms much of the eastern boundary of Stafford's parish.



Map 30: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: Colwich-and-Stowe.
Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

Key to Map 30

Scale 

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Baswich

Colwich-and-Stowe

Hanbury

Stafford

Abbreviations

CH	Chartley Holme
Fr	Fradswell
Ki	Kingstone
W	Weston-upon-Trent

The area east of Colwich-and-Stowe is notable because Domesday Book records the presence of priests at three adjacent manors which later also formed adjacent parishes: at Abbot's Bromley, Blithfield and Colton.[204] Although the presence of a priest may be a sign of superior status, their proximity means that all four churches (i.e. those mentioned above, plus Colwich-and-Stowe) cannot have been of equal standing and antiquity: that is to say, some or all must have been carved out of the parish of another high-status church. Abbot's Bromley and Blithfield had no known chapels in the late Middle Ages, and this, combined with their proximity to superior churches *with* known dependencies (Colwich-and-Stowe and, we shall see, Hanbury) makes it likely that they were parochial chapels in origin, but broke free from their mother-church without leaving traces of their formerly subordinate position. A link between Colwich and Colton can, however, be postulated because the names of these adjacent parishes may be derived from the same first element: Old English *col* ('coal, charcoal').[205] This implies that both may once have been part of the same land-unit. The nineteenth-century parochial geography of the area lends further support to this suggestion, since Colwich had several detached 'islands' in Colton at that time (although it is likewise possible that Colwich acquired these small 'islands' for some other reason prior to the nineteenth century).[206]

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[204] DB, ff. 247 (Abbot's Bromley) & 248 (Blithfield and Colton); Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 4,5 (Abbot's Bromley), 8,15 (Colton) and 8,27 (Blithfield).

[205] Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, pp. 203-04. Although the first element of Colwich's name may instead be derived from the Old English personal name *Col(l)a*, Horovitz prefers *col*. Watts, however, sees the personal name is the more likely derivation, with Old English *col* only a possibility: Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 152.

[206] LRO B/A/15 Tithe Map for Colton (1839); Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, p. 53. See also: Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, p. 53. Colton is not recorded in the *Taxatio* but fabric of the present church shows that a church was on that site by the thirteenth century: Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 106; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 26.

7.6.2 Hanbury

Ten miles east of Colwich-and-Stowe is Hanbury, whose church was associated with the cult of St Wærburh, daughter of King Wulfhere (670-704), from at least the tenth century.[207] Hanbury is a rare example of a church in Staffordshire for which we have explicit documentary evidence relating to the pre-Conquest period, since the church is said to have housed Wærburh's relics before they were transferred to Chester by 958, and in the late Middle Ages Wærburh was thought to have ruled a nunnery at Hanbury.[208] Although in its present form Wærburh's Life was copied out at Chester in the late tenth century, there are reasons for thinking that it was based on a ninth-century version compiled at Hanbury, since one passage, in which divine help was received to transfer Wærburh's body from Threckingham (Lincolnshire) to Hanbury, serves to enhance Hanbury's prestige.[209] While John of Worcester implies that a monastery at Hanbury was destroyed during the Scandinavian raids of the ninth century, even if a Scandinavian army 'visited' Hanbury (an event for which there is no direct evidence), this would not automatically have led to the end of all religious life there.[210] Indeed, whatever was happening at Hanbury in the ninth century, its relatively early association with a royal saint's cult makes it a strong candidate for a late Anglo-Saxon mother-church.

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[207] Blair, 'A Handlist', p. 557.

[208] Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 305 & 436, n. 352. John Blair argues that Æthelflæd may have moved the relics to Chester: Blair, 'A Handlist', p. 557; *idem*, *The Church*, p. 309.

[209] Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 305, citing J. Tait (ed.), *The Chartulary or Register of the Abbey of St Werburgh, Chester* (Manchester: Chetnam Society, 1920), pp. x-xi.

[210] John of Worcester records that when Wærburh died her body was taken to Hanbury and '*quod usque ad tempus quo gens pagana Danorum crudeli cede et tyrannica depopulatione Anglorum uastauerunt prouincias mansit incorruptum*' ('there it remained incorrupt until the time when the pagan people of the Danes laid waste to the regions of the English with cruel slaughter and savage devastatation'): R.R. Darlington & P. McGurk (eds), *The Chronicle of John of Worcester: Volume II: the Annals from 450 to 1066* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 126-27. Dawn Hadley, however, argues that there is no evidence that the monastery was destroyed during the ninth-century Scandinavian raids: Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 304-06.

Like Colwich-and-Stowe, Ilam, Stoke and Stone, there is no entry for Hanbury in Domesday Book, although the priest recorded in the entry for Fauld may have been connected to Hanbury's church: that is to say, the fact that Fauld was later part of Hanbury's parish raises the possibility that the priest in question belonged to Hanbury church but held land at Fauld.[211] Hanbury was of superior status in the late Middle Ages, being valued at £33 6s 8d in 1291, and retaining control over an extensive parish into the modern period.[212] Its large nineteenth-century parish is depicted on Map 31.[213] Hanbury had a chapel of ease at Marchington in 1563, and this, along with Newborough, was still considered to pertain to Hanbury in the late eighteenth century.[214] No further links with nearby churches have come to light, but since the adjoining parishes of Abbot's Bromley, Hamstall Ridware, Tutbury, Uttoxeter and Yoxall demonstrate no connections to any other superior church nearby, it is possible that some or all of them had once been dependent on Hanbury. J.C. Wedgwood says that Yoxall and Hamstall Ridware 'must have come out of Needwood Forst, which was probably a nominal part of the ancient Hanbury', but without explaining the basis of his view.[215] It is probably, however, because the southern boundaries of Yoxall and Hamstall Ridware are marked by the River Trent, and it is arguably unlikely that mother-church parishes would cross such a major river. Indeed, we shall see that there are circumstantial reasons for thinking that a mother-church parish incorporating

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[211] Shaw, *Antiquities*, pp. 71-72. For Fauld: DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 10,7. Fauld and Hanbury were part of a manor of the same name in the fourteenth century: R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 280. Dawn Hadley, however, notes that there is no direct evidence of a connection between the priest at Fauld and the church at Hanbury: Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 306.

[212] *Taxatio*, p. 243.

[213] It included the townships of Draycott, Stubby Lane and Moreton; Fauld; Hanbury, Hanbury Woodend and Coton; Marchington; Marchington Woodlands; and Newborough with Thorney Lanes: Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, pp. 473-76.

[214] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 114; Shaw, *The History*, p. 92.

[215] Wedgwood, 'Early Staffordshire History', pp. 197-98.

those areas later dependent on Burton-upon-Trent, Hanbury and Tatenhill may have once been focused on Hanbury's church.

7.6.3 Burton-upon-Trent

A Benedictine abbey was founded at Burton-upon-Trent by Wulfric Spot, who provided it with widespread lands, largely in Derbyshire, in his will of *c.* 1004.[216] But most religious houses founded during the era of monastic reform are believed to have been re-foundations of pre-existing churches,[217] and Wulfric's will indeed implies that there was already a religious community of some sort at Burton since his grant to the Abbey included '*Byrtun þe þ' mynster on stent*' ('Burton on which the *mynster* stands'). The will does not, however, specify the type of religious community in question, and Old English *mynster* has a wide semantic range.[218] Burton was also associated with Modwenna, a local saint who is said to have founded a chapel on Andressey, an island in the Trent opposite modern Burton.[219] Modwenna was promoted at Burton during the abbacy of Geoffrey (1114-50), who wrote her Life, recorded miracles and rebuilt her shrine in the abbey.[220] Although her Life is, in the words of Bartlett, a 'wholesale borrowing of a Hiberno-Latin Life for the otherwise

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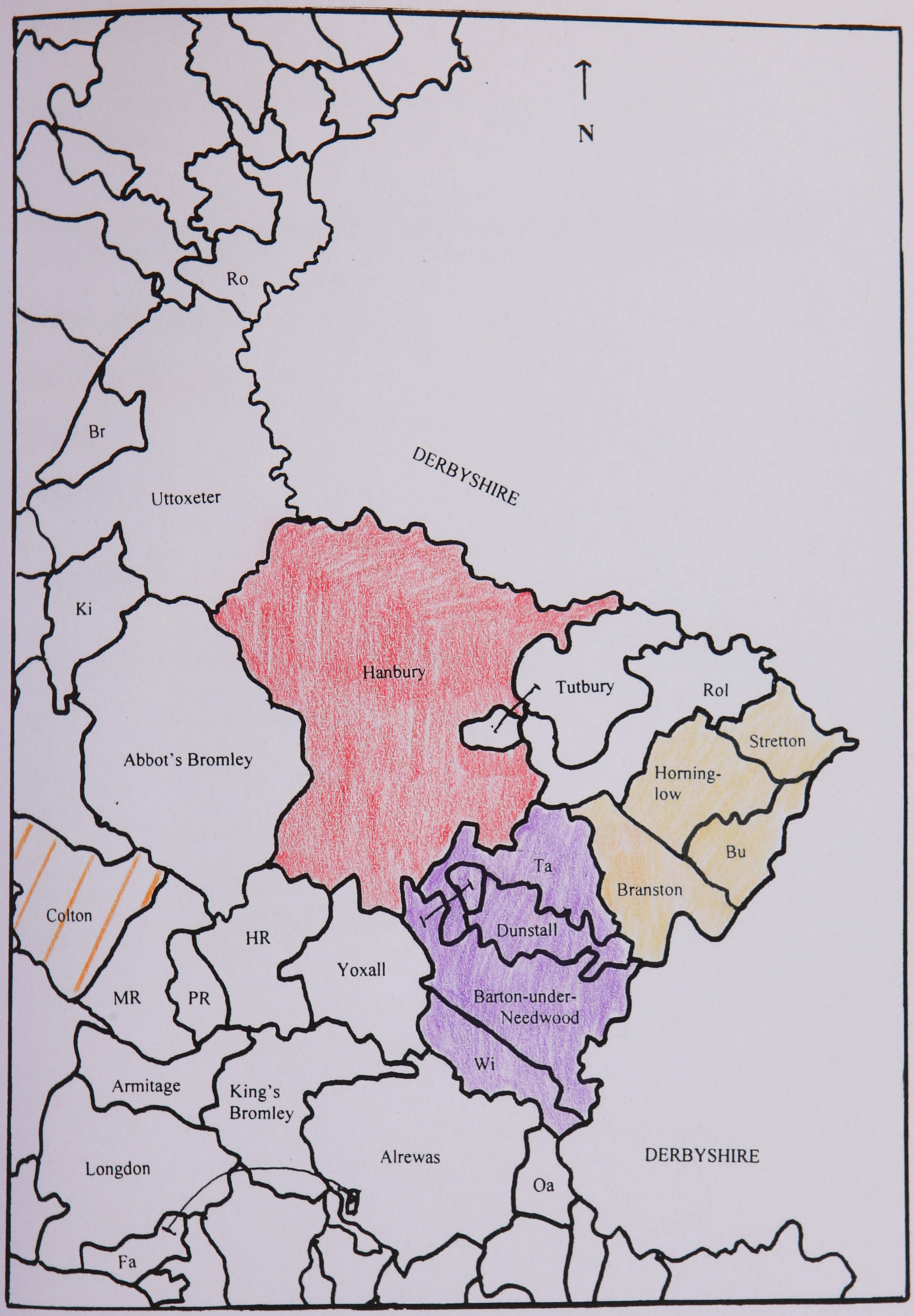
[216] S 1536; P.H. Sawyer (ed.), *Charters of Burton Abbey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), no. 29, pp. 63-66.

[217] Blair, 'Introduction', pp. 3-6; Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 300. For the monastic reform: D.M. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 940-1216* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn, 1963); P. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), pp. 180-93.

[218] Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 29, pp. xxviii & 55. Also: Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 300. For discussion of the semantic range of *mynster*: Blair, *The Church*, pp. 2-3; S. Foot, 'Anglo-Saxon Minsters: A Review of the Terminology', in J. Blair & R. Sharpe (eds.), *Pastoral Care Before the Parish* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), pp. 212-25

[219] Blair, 'A Handlist', p. 546; Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 297-99; U.C. Hannam & M.W. Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 199.

[220] I.J. Atherton in Tringham (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IX*, p. 108. Atherton provides an alternative model for Burton's origins, arguing that 'if, as the *Life* of St. Modwen implies, there was an Anglo-Saxon chapel dedicated to St. Andrew on Andresey, it is possible that it was associated with one of the foundations of the Northumbrian Bishop Wilfrid when he was exercising episcopal functions in Mercia between 666 and 669. Wilfrid founded a number of unidentified "monasteries" in Mercia, and his devotion to St. Andrew is indicated by his churches at Hexham (Northumb.) and Oundle (Northants.): *ibid.*, p. 109.



Map 31: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: Hanbury and Burton-upon-Trent
Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467

Key to Map 31

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Burton-upon-Trent

Colwich-and-Stowe

Hanbury

Tatenhill

Abbreviations

Br	Bramshall
Bu	Burton-upon-Trent and Burton Extra
Fa	Farewell
HR	Hamstall Ridware
Ki	Kingstone
MR	Mavesyn Ridware
Oa	Oakley
PR	Pipe Ridware
Ro	Rocester
Rol	Rolleston
Ta	Tatenhill and Callingwood
Wi	Wichnor

unchronicled bones of an obscure West Midlands saint',[221] Burton's late medieval association with Modwenna cannot be denied since Burton was sometimes known as the abbey of St Mary and St Modwen, and sometimes called *Modwennastow*.[222]

The original parochial geography of this area is obscure, a situation partly due to the abbey's presence. Indeed, the high status of the abbey – by far the most important of Staffordshire's religious houses in the late Middle Ages[223] – may have magnified the apparent significance of any pre-existing church at Burton. The nineteenth-century parish of Burton-upon-Trent was large, comprising the townships of Burton, Burton Extra, Branston, Horninglow, Stretton, and Winshill, which are shown on Map 31.[224] It also included part of Stapenhill, which, along with Winshill, we have seen was on the eastern side of the River Trent, and therefore in Derbyshire.[225] Dawn Hadley, however, has argued that the antiquity of this connection with Stapenhill is questionable, for if Stapenhill really were originally in Burton parish, it is strange that its chapelries were not: indeed, she notes that it is unknown for a mother-church parish in the Trent valley to traverse that river. The abbey held land in Winshill and Stapenhill in the eleventh century, and this, she says, rather than an earlier parochial connection, might provide a context for the inclusion of parts of these places in Burton's parish.[226] It has also been argued that the spiritual

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[221] R. Bartlett (ed.), *Geoffrey of Burton: Life of St Modwenna* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. xiv.
[222] Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 299; Hannam & Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 199. We have already seen that M.J. Franklin has argued that there was a secular minster at Burton: above, p. 257, n. 68.
[223] For example in 1535 producing a gross revenue of more than double that of the next richest houses in the shire, Tutbury Priory and Dieulacres Abby: Hannam & Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 200.
[224] N.J. Tringham in Tringham (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IX*, p. 3.
[225] White, *History*, p. 309.
[226] Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 302. For example, as part of his life of Modwenna, Geoffrey of Burton provides information about the abbey's history and records that 'd*uo namque uillani habitabant Stapenelle sub iure abbatis Burtonie qui profugerunt ad uillam proximam que Drachelawa dicitur, relinquentes inique dominos suos monachos et manere cupientes sub potestate Rogeri comitis qui Pictauensis cognominabatur*' ('there were two villagers living in Stapenhill under the jurisdiction of the abbot of Burton who ran away into the neighbouring village of Drakelow, wrongfully leaving their

jurisdiction which in the thirteenth century the abbot of Burton exercised over Abbot's Bromley and Mickleover (Derbyshire) implies that these places were too originally part of Burton's parish.[227] Yet this is most unlikely as it would make Burton's parish unrealistically large: Abbot's Bromley and Mickleover are situated some ten miles north-west-west and eight miles north-east of Burton respectively (with Mickleover also separated from Burton by places which we have seen were dependent on Repton). The abbot's spiritual jurisdiction in Abbot's Bromley and Mickleover probably results instead from the abbey holding land at these places by the late eleventh century.[228]

The situation in this area is further complicated by the presence of Rolleston Tatenhill, respectively located immediately north and south of Burton's parish, whose churches both show signs of higher-than-usual status. Domesday Book, for instance, records the presence of a priest at Rolleston, and its churchyard contains an Anglo-Saxon cross head.[229] There is no Domesday entry for Tatenhill, but the Taxatio records that it had (unnamed) chapels in 1291. These were probably the chapels at Barton-under-Needwood, Dunstall and Wichnor, which all belonged to Tatenhill in the mid sixteenth century, and which were townships within its nineteenth-century parish.[230] Since there are no other grounds for thinking that Rolleston or Tatenhill were high-status churches, it once again seems likely that they were parochial chapels

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lords, the monks, and wishing to live under the authority of Roger the Poitevin'): Bartlett (ed.), *Geoffrey*, pp. 192-93.

[227] Atherton in Tringham (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IX*, p. 109.

[228] Abbot's Bromley was granted to Burton Abbey by Wulfric and the abbey held land at Mickleover in 1086. For Abbot's Bromley: S 1536; Sawyer (ed.), *Charters*, no. 29, pp. xxviii-xxix & 55. For Mickleover: DB, f. 273; Morgan (ed.), *DB: Derbys.*, 3,1.

[229] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs*, 10,3. Pevsner, however, argues that the cross head comes from Tatenhill, but does not explain the basis of his view: Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 227. Conversely, Sidebottom lists four fragments of Anglo-Saxon sculpture at Rolleston, which, he says, although not *in situ*, either are built into pre-Victorian church fabric, or are found by reliable archaeological means to be reasonably associated with that church: Sidebottom, 'Schools of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture', p. 149.

[230] *Taxatio*, p. 243. Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 276-78. See also: Shaw, *The History*, pp. 113 & 125. It has been argued that the parish of Tutbury was carved out of Rolleston and Hanbury: D. Hooke, *The Landscape of Anglo-Saxon Staffordshire* (Keele: University of Keele, 1983), p. 37.

in origin, but neither demonstrates any direct links with other high-status churches nearby.

Further clues towards the original parochial geography of this area might, however, be found in its natural topography. There is a natural coherence to the area incorporating Burton, Hanbury, Rolleston and Tatenhill, which, if Yoxall and Abbot's Bromley were also included, is bounded by major rivers on three sides: the Rivers Trent and Dove on the south and east, and the River Blithe on west.[231] But this is merely a hypothesis, especially considering the absence of any direct evidence of ecclesiastical links between these churches. Indeed, the model does not explain which of the churches in question is likely to have been the earliest – although Hanbury, with its relatively early association with a royal saint's cult, is arguably the strongest candidate for such a role.

7.7 Staffordshire's early parochial geography: (v) the South-East

Much of this part of Staffordshire is once again low lying and characterised by relatively fertile soils, although on the approach to the Birmingham plateau, in the very south of the shire, the land begins to rise and soils tend towards heaviness.[232] There is less correlation between the shire's parochial geography and its boundary in South Staffordshire than in the shire's central belt and further north, and so from now on the nearest parts of neighbouring shires will be discussed within the context of the Staffordshire churches whose parishes they adjoin. Whereas in North Staffordshire the shire boundary often followed the sort of major topographical features which, arguably, would form a convenient boundary for both mother-church parishes and the shire alike, in South Staffordshire the shire boundary made use of less prominent

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[231] In the north such a land-unit would be bounded by high ground at the north of Abbot's Bromley parish.
[232] See Chapter 1.2, p. 4.

natural features. Yet the lesser degree of correlation may also be due to the presence of Lichfield in this part of the shire: we shall see that St Michael's at Lichfield may have served an exceptionally large parish – so large, in fact, that it *had* to be divided between Staffordshire and Warwickshire if both shire towns were to have suitably-sized territories.[233]

7.7.1 Lichfield

There were four late medieval churches at Lichfield: the cathedral itself, St Michael's, St Chad's, and St Mary's, the latter founded for the twelfth-century borough as a dependent chapel of St Michael's in whose parish the borough stood.[234] There are good signs that St Michael's originated prior to the tenth century. Steven Bassett argues that it was Lichfield's earliest church and suggests that the evident subordination to it of St Chad's (at Stowe in Lichfield, a mile to the east of the cathedral), whose middle Anglo-Saxon origins are indicated by its being located at a place called *stōw*, shows that St Michael's preceded that church. 'Had St Michael's been of later foundation than St Chad's', argues Bassett, 'it could surely have never eclipsed the latter so completely', as we shall see that it did.[235] He also proposes that St Michael's may even be of British origin. This, he argues, is implied by, amongst other things, the lack of discernable impact made by the Anglo-Saxon cathedral on the

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[233] That is to say, if Staffordshire were created after the mother-church parishes of this region had been laid out, then even if, as the situation in the northern two thirds of the shire might imply, the shire was designed to encompass, but not cross, mother-church parishes, St Michael's parish was so large that it would by necessity be divided between Staffordshire and Warwickshire if both shire towns were to be provided with coherent territories. Alternatively, if the shire was created before its mother-church parishes, the area given to St Michael's was so large that the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary had to be ignored.

[234] S.R. Bassett, 'Medieval Lichfield: A Topographical Review', *Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 22 (1980-81), pp. 114-15.

[235] *Idem*, 'Church and Diocese in the West Midlands: the Transition from British to Anglo-Saxon Control', in Blair & Sharpe (eds), *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, p. 33. Bassett argues that St Michael's is in many ways analogous to St Helen's, Worcester: *ibid.*, p. 33. For Worcester: *ibid.*, pp. 20-26; *idem*, 'Churches in Worcester Before and After the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 69 (1989), pp. 225-56.

parochial geography of the Lichfield region, which implies the primacy of St Michael's. Bassett further says that 'had St Michael's been set up, as some churches were in and after the tenth century, to act as the cathedral's parish church, it is inconceivable that its parish would have been not only so large but so coherent, or indeed that it would have been situated at such a distance from its mother church. It must', he says, 'therefore, have predated it'.[236]

Irrespective of whether St Michael's was of British origin, its remarkably large parish indicates that it was of exceptional status. The parish was still large in the mid nineteenth century, containing the townships of Lichfield St Michael (with Freeford), Burntwood, Hammerwich, Fulfen and Streethay, as well as Fisherwick, a detached area approximately two miles to the east.[237] Moreover, Bassett notes that St Chad's parish, which lies in two distinct parts (along with the extra-parochial cathedral precinct), interlocks with St Michael's parish in a way that indicates that it too once formed part of the latter. The same is true of Farewell, situated around three miles north-west of St Michael's.[238] The interlocking parishes of St Michael's and St Chad's are depicted on Map 32, and early parochial affiliations in South-East Staffordshire and North-West Warwickshire on Map 33.

Bassett also argues that there are very good grounds for thinking that the ecclesiastical parishes of Shenstone (including part of Ogley Hay), Weeford (including the townships of Swinfen and Packington), and Hints (including Canwell) were also once subject to St Michael's.[239] In the twelfth century Shenstone was at the centre of a dispute between Lichfield and Osney Abbey (Oxfordshire) over the rights to its spiritualities, which eventually, in *c.* 1175, was judged in Lichfield's favour. 'As

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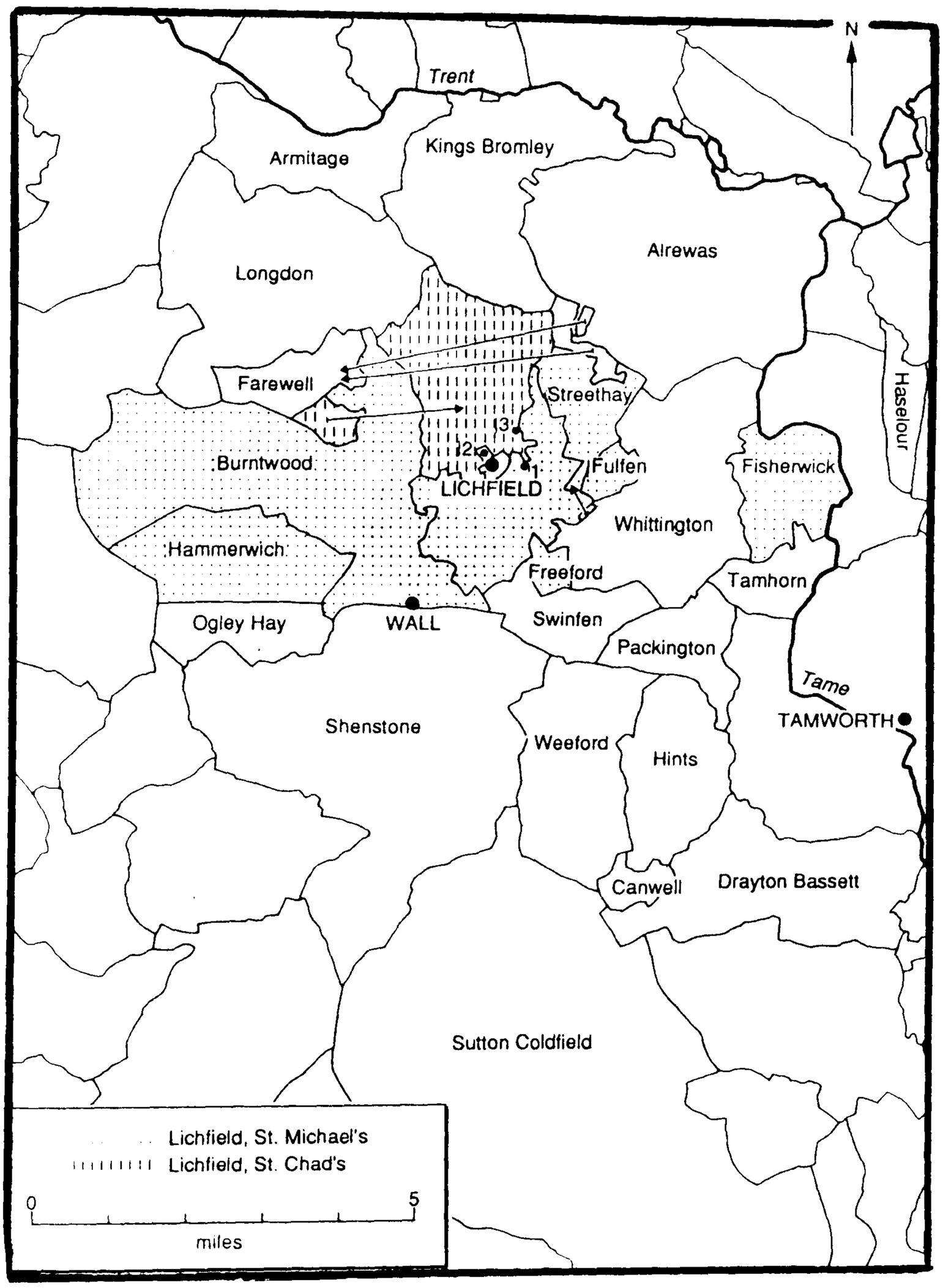
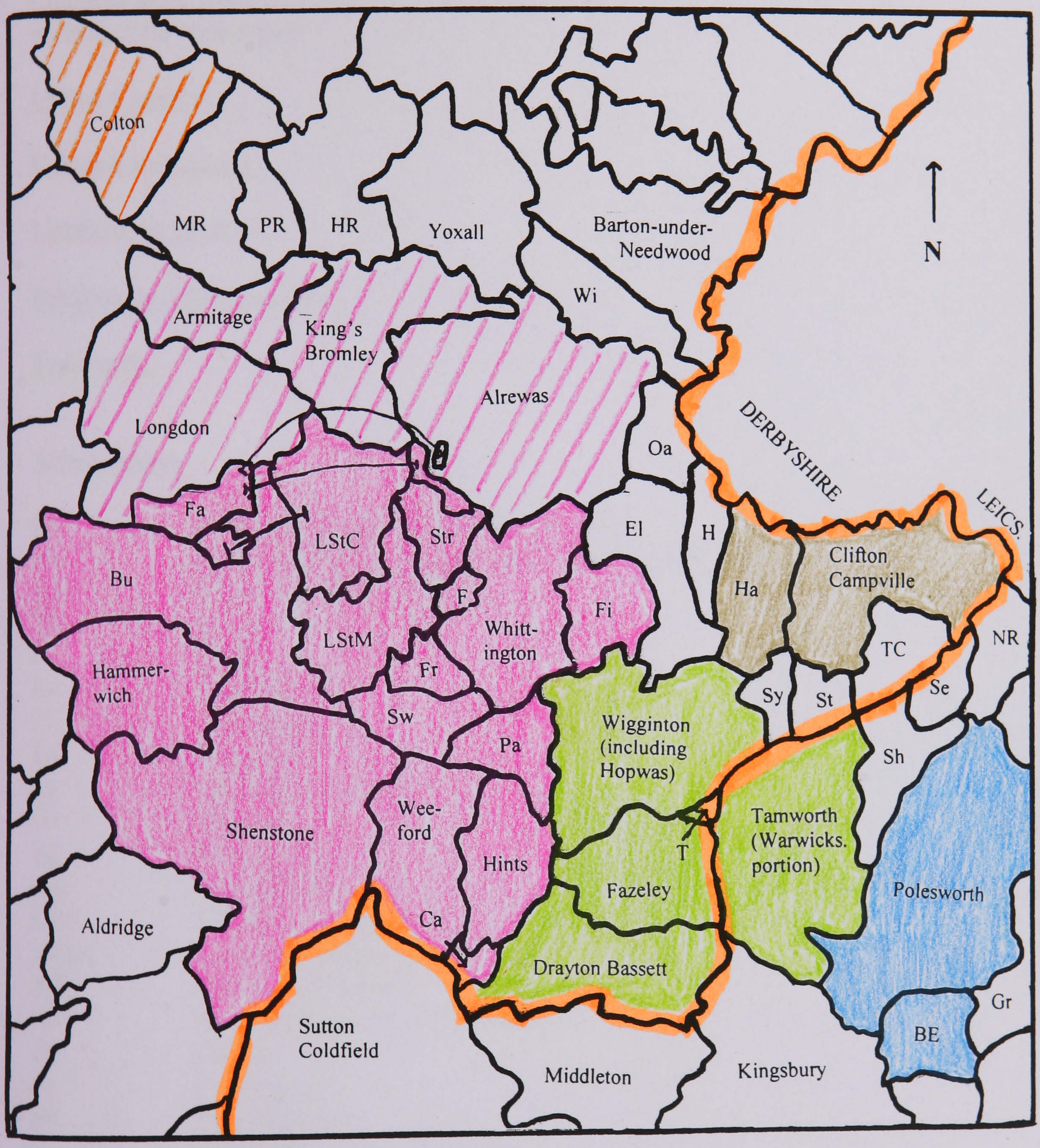
[236] *Idem*, 'Church and Diocese', pp. 33-34.
[237] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[238] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.
[239] *Ibid.*, p. 31.



Map 32: Parishes and townships in the vicinity of Lichfield in the early nineteenth century. Numbered sites are churches: 1. Lichfield St Michael; 2. Lichfield Cathedral; 3 Lichfield St Chad (at Stowe)

Source: S.R. Bassett, 'Church and Diocese in the West Midlands: the Transition from British to Anglo-Saxon Control', in J. Blair & R. Sharpe (eds), *Pastoral Care Before the Parish* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), p. 30



Map 33: Parishes in South-East Staffordshire and North-West Warwickshire in the early nineteenth century. Former parochial affiliations shown. Staffordshire's eastern boundary highlighted. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 467 and a Map of Warwickshire's Ecclesiastical Parishes published by the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies (Canterbury, 1983)

Key to Map 33

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Clifton Campville

Colwich-and-Stowe

Lichfield, St Michael

Polesworth (Warwickshire)

Tamworth

Abbreviations

BE	Baddesley Ensor (Warwickshire)
Bu	Burntwood, Edjal, Woodhouse, Pipe Hill and Wall
Ca	Canwell (extra parochial)
El	Elford
F	Fulfin
Fa	Farewell
Fi	Fisherwick
Fr	Freeford
Gr	Grendon (Warwickshire)
H	Haslour
Ha	Harlaston
HR	Hamstall Ridware
LStC	Lichfield, St Chad
LStM	Lichfield, St Michael
MR	Mavesyn Ridware
NR	Newton Regis (Warwickshire)
Oa	Oakley
Pa	Packington
PR	Pipe Ridware
Se	Seckington (Warwickshire)
Sh	Shuttington (Warwickshire)
St	Statfold
Str	Streethay
Sw	Swinfen
Sy	Syerscote
T	Tamworth borough
TC	Thorpe Constantine
Wi	Wichnor

no claim to temporal lordship was involved', argues Bassett, 'this must mean that Lichfield was Shenstone's mother-church (i.e. that Shenstone had formerly been part of St Michael's parish, for there can be no doubt that parochial responsibility for the church of Lichfield's lands lay with St Michael's, not the cathedral itself)'.[240] Weeford was a prebend of the church of Lichfield and is thought to have been one of its five original ones, along with Freeford, Handsacre, Longdon and Statfold.[241] This, combined with its close proximity to Lichfield and the way in which it is encircled by places which were (or, in the case of Sutton, might have been) dependent on St Michael's, makes it likely that Weeford had once been subject to that church too.[242] Hints, like Weeford, was a perpetual curacy of the church of Lichfield, and its close link with Lichfield was of Anglo-Saxon origin since Domesday Book lists it as a member of its manor.[243] Sutton Coldfield may once have been within St Michael's parish too, since it was presumably named in relation to somewhere to the north. The most likely candidates for such a role are Shenstone, which adjoins Sutton to the north, or Lichfield itself.[244] If this were the case then Lichfield St Michael's would be a rare example of a Staffordshire-based parish crossing the shire's boundary since Sutton was in Warwickshire in the late eleventh century.[245]

St Michael's parish was therefore very large, especially compared to those belonging to many other superior churches in Staffordshire. It may at first have even

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[240] *Ibid.*, p. 31, n. 57, citing H.E. Savage (ed.), 'Shenstone Charters (from the Oseney Chartulary)', *SHC*, 1923, pp. 259 & 262 and *idem* (ed.), *Magnum Registrum Album*, no. 170, p. 79.

[241] Geoffrey, prior of Coventry, recorded *c.* 1226 that Bishop Roger de Clinton (1129-48) 'established the college of canons at Lichfield: before there had only been five priests there serving their own chapel'. They are possibly the same five canons mentioned as holding three ploughs in Lichfield in Domesday Book, and seem to have become the prebendaries of Freeford, Handsacre, Longdon, Statfold and Weeford. Franklin argues that 'in some sense these must have been the lineal descendents of the minster priests possibly established by Bishop Æthelweald in 822': Franklin (ed.), *EEA XIV*, pp. xlii-xliii. For the canons at Domesday: DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,16.

[242] Bassett, 'Church and Diocese', p. 31, n. 58.

[243] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,22; Bassett, 'Church and Diocese', p. 31, n. 59.

[244] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

[245] DB, f. 238; J. Plaister (ed.), *Domesday Book: Warwickshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976), 1,7.

greater still since we shall see that the high-status churches of Harborne and Walsall also show signs of former dependence on Lichfield.[246] Furthermore, the Lichfield area is limited to the north and east by the Rivers Trent and Tame respectively, but only once does reach it reach either river (at Fisherwick, whose eastern boundary is marked by the Tame). There are, however, good reasons for thinking that St Michael's parish had once incorporated most of, if not all, the land up to the Trent and Tame. The situation is most straightforward to the north: i.e. in the area running up to the Trent. Bassett argues that four places along the south bank of the Trent – Alrewas, its former chapelry of King's Bromley, Longdon and Handsacre (now known as Armitage) – comprise 'a zone of land which forms a natural adjunct to the core of St Michael's parish'. Indeed, all of these places are in some way connected to Lichfield: we have already seen that Longdon and Handsacre, for instance, are thought to have been two of the cathedral's earliest prebends.[247] But the original parochial layout of much of the area which lies between St Michael's parish and the Tame is less easy to discern, because in the late Middle Ages this area fell within the parish of St Editha's, Tamworth, a church whose origins are very difficult to determine.[248]

7.7.2 Tamworth

Æthelflæd is said to have built defences at Tamworth in 913, and so as was the case at Stafford, we do not know whether Tamworth's principal church was founded in the

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[246] Below, pp. 309-15.

[247] *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33. Bassett says that Alrewas 'was probably first a chapel of St Michael's, since it belonged to the church of Lichfield by the mid-twelfth century and had in its parish land beyond the Trent which was in the episcopal manor in 1066': *ibid.*, p. 32, n. 60. See DB, ff. 247 & 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,11 & 2,22; Savage (ed.), *Magnum Registrum Album*, no. 682, pp. 321-22. The land in question is Pipe Ridware.

[248] Bassett argues that several pieces of land beyond the Trent and the Tame which, directly or indirectly, were subject to St Michael's church may at first have belonged to other churches but become attached to St Michel's as a result of their being given to the church of Lichfield at some time in the Anglo-Saxon period. Statfold, near Tamworth, which is allegedly one of Lichfield's earliest prebends, may be one; another instance may be Pipe Ridware, one of the chapelries of Alrewas, which was a member of the manor of Lichfield in 1066: Bassett, 'Church and Diocese', p. 32.

wake of her work there, or whether it had existed before.[249] Nevertheless, St Editha's was clearly an important church in the late Middle Ages, as evidenced by its association with a local saint, Eadgyth (Editha), and its status as a collegiate church and royal free chapel by the fourteenth century.[250] The church also appears to have been cruciform by the end of the twelfth century at the latest.[251]

Tamworth was first described as a royal free chapel in the fourteenth century. According to Denton, unlike Penkridge and Stafford, it was one of three royal free chapels created in existing churches at this time, which, despite being royal colleges, were not royal peculiars (meaning that it was the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, not the king, who instituted Tamworth's dean and prebends).[252] We should therefore not read too much into its status as a royal free chapel: i.e. because the status was acquired at a relatively late stage, it may throw little light on the church's origins. Although St Editha's parish has proved hard to reconstruct, it certainly traversed Staffordshire's late eleventh-century boundary – although considering the shire boundary dissected Tamworth borough, this is unsurprising. Prebends of Tamworth were recorded at Wilnecote in 1298, Bonehill and Wigginton in 1311, Syerscote in 1320, and at Coton in 1535.[253] All of these places are in Staffordshire except Wilnecote, also a chapel of ease to Tamworth, which is in Warwickshire.[254] Drayton

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[249] As argued by Steven Bassett: *ibid.*, p. 32, n. 62. For Tamworth being provided with defences: ASC, MSS 'B' & 'C', 913; Taylor (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. B.*, p. 50; O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C.*, p. 75; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 212.

[250] Eadgyth was said to rest at Tamworth and Polesworth (Warwickshire), located just three miles east of Tamworth. Although having separate identities, John Blair argues that two Eadgyths may be identical. The fact that a saint of this name occurs in the first part of the *Secgan* (a catalogue of saints resting places in England copied out in the early eleventh century), points towards a pre-Viking cult: Blair, 'A Handlist', pp. 527-28. The antiquity of Tamworth's association with Edith, however, is open to doubt: below, p. 307.

[251] Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 275; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 53.

[252] Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, p. 116. Also: Bassett, 'Church and Diocese', p. 32, n. 62; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 49. Blair also comments that the status of the church at Tamworth is unclear: Blair, *The Church*, p. 287.

[253] Hughs (ed.), *The Register*, nos 10, 724, 732 & 1266 (pp. 2, 92-93 & 173); *Valor*, p. 148.

[254] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 50-51, citing W. Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Volume II*, p. 1125.

Bassett, immediately south of the Tamworth township of Fazeley, seems once to have been dependent on St Editha's too, since the dean and chapter presented to Drayton's church in 1300 and 1343.[255]

Tamworth's reconstructed parish is fairly small compared to many of those belonging to other high-status churches in Staffordshire. This may be because Tamworth was relatively unsuccessful at maintaining mother-church rights over its dependencies, but could also be because it originated as a sub-minster. Indeed, we have already seen that all of the land in Tamworth's parish west of the Tame may have been carved out of the parish belonging to St Michael's at Lichfield.[256] Tamworth's position is complicated by the fact that although the area to the west of its reconstructed parish was clearly dependent on St Michael's, the early parochial geography immediately north, east and south of Tamworth has proved difficult to reconstruct, not least because of the presence of several churches which, superficially at least, show signs of being of superior status. For instance, five miles north-east of Tamworth is the Staffordshire parish of Clifton Campville, where Domesday Book records the presence of a priest.[257] In 1563 Clifton was said to have to chapels of ease, at Harlaston and Chilcote. Although the latter place is now in Leicestershire, it was part of Derbyshire at the time of Domesday Book, forming part of Repton's sokeland but being said to pertain to 'Clifton in Staffordshire'.[258] Clifton shows no other signs

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[255] For 1300: *ibid*, no. 286, p. 35; D.A. Johnson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 311; for 1343: J.C. Wedgwood (ed.), 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Ad Quod Danum, Etc., Staffordshire: Edw. III (1327-66)', *SHC*, 1913, p. 101.

[256] Steven Bassett argues that St Editha's may have benefitted from royal grants of land that had hitherto lain within the parish of St Michael's, Lichfield: Bassett, 'Church and Diocese', p. 32, n. 62.

[257] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,29.

[258] As argued by Dawn Hadley: Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', pp. 235-36. For Clifton's chapels: Landor, (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 67-69. For Chilcote: DB, f. 272; Morgan (ed.), *DB: Derbys.*, 1,25.

of superior status, and so may have originated as a parochial chapel, but, if so, no direct links with a high-status church nearby have come to light.[259]

Domesday Book records the presence of two priests at Kingsbury (Warwickshire), five miles south of Tamworth, but since there is little other evidence of this church's superior status, it seems likely that it too was a sub-minster in origin.[260] The church at Polesworth, likewise in Warwickshire and located three miles east of Tamworth, had a chapel at Baddesley Ensor in the late Middle Ages, and tithes from Baddesley belonged to the rector of Polesworth.[261] Like Tamworth's, its church is associated with a saint named Eadgyth. Although late medieval writers had two separate Eadgyths, the proximity of Tamworth and Polesworth, combined with the fact that both ladies were said to be princesses means that they could at first have been the same saint.[262] If so, the shared dedication could, then, be indicative of an early connection between the two churches (although conversely it has been argued that Tamworth church may have acquired the dedication to Editha in the Norman period under the patronage of the Marmion family, who were closely associated with Polesworth).[263] The area east of Polseworth appears to have been focused

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[259] Anne Jenkins, however, has argued that the manorial connection between this area and Repton in the late eleventh century 'may show that Clifton Campville was a lesser minster founded within the larger area of Repton': Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 63. Dawn Hadley also postulates the existence of a very large parish centred on Repton which included Chilcote and Repton's detached chapel at Measham, situated three miles east of Chilcote: Hadley, 'Danelaw Society', p. 235.

[260] Steven Bassett suggests that Kingsbury may have been dependent on Coleshill (Warwickshire), situated approximately four miles to the south: Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 15. For the Domesday priests: DB, f. 239; Plaister (ed.), *DB: Warwicks.*, 15,4. Kingsbury is perhaps analogous to Norbury, near Gnosall: above, p. 289.

[261] H.M. Briggs in L.F. Salzman (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Warwick Volume IV: Hemlingford Hundred* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 21; Jenkins 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 52.

[262] Blair, 'A Handlist', pp. 527-28.

[263] J. Gould, 'Saint Edith of Polesworth and Tamworth', *Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 27, 1985-86, pp. 37-38; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 52.

ecclesiastically on Orton-on-the-Hill (Leicestershire), which had chapels at Baxterley, Grendon, Gopshull and Twycross.[264]

The early parochial history of this area would clearly benefit from more detailed investigation. Nevertheless, the fact that there is little correlation between the shire boundary and the area's parochial geography, is unsurprising. Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire converge in this area, and we have already seen that the course of the shire boundary through the Tamworth area is atypical, since it ran through the heart of Tamworth borough. Indeed, Tamworth's is not the only parish which traversed shire boundaries in this area, since Baxterley and Grendon, both chapels of Orton-on-the Hill (Leicestershire), were in Warwickshire at the time of Domesday Book.[265]

7.7.3 Walsall

Walsall, situated south-west of Shenstone, had three known dependent chapels in the late Middle Ages. Rushall and Wednesbury were both described as its chapels in the mid fourteenth century, and it had a further chapel at Bloxwich in the early fifteenth. Bloxwich was still part of Walsall's large parish in the nineteenth century.[266] Norton Canes, situated approximately five miles north of Walsall, may have once been part of its parish too since its name ('the north *tūn*') implies that it was once part of a land-unit focused on somewhere to its south. This could have been Walsall, although there

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[264] *Ibid.*, citing W. Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire Volume II*, p. 1125.
[265] DB, f. 242; Plaister (ed.), *DB: Warwicks.*, 19,1.
[266] For Bloxwich: G.C. Baugh, M.W. Greenslade & D.A. Johnson in M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume XVII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. XVII*], pp. 161 & 226; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 46. For Rushall and Wednesbury: Baugh, Greenslade & Johnson in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XVII*, p. 226; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 46; R.A. Wilson (ed.), 'The Second Register of Bishop Roger de Stretton. A.D. 1360-1385', *SHC*, New Series, 8 (1905), p. 122.

are no direct ecclesiastical links between these places.[267] All of these places are depicted on Map 34. Topographical evidence suggests that Pelsall was may have once been dependent on Walsall too, even though it was a chapel of Wolverhampton church by 1546 and was still part of that church's parish in the nineteenth century.[268] Pelsall was surrounded by Walsall's parish on three sides, and entirely so if Norton Canes were once dependent on that church, which raises the likelihood that it originally belonged to Walsall but was later drawn into Wolverhampton's parish. If so, this had probably occurred as a result of land at Pelsall having been granted to Wolverhampton in the late tenth century.[269]

The are, however, reasons for thinking that Walsall may once have been dependent on St Michael's, Lichfield.[270] Walsall church was granted to Halesowen Abbey in the early thirteenth century, but in 1248 Lichfield claimed a former right in Walsall which resulted in Halesowen agreeing to make an annual payment to Lichfield on the feasts of St Michael and of the Resurrection.[271] Unfortunately the nature of these 'former rights' are not specified, and the document in question likewise does not make clear whether Walsall was connected to the cathedral and diocese (because it had given to the cathedral at some unrecorded point) or to St Michael's parish church. But the facts that Walsall is directly south-west of areas which were probably once part of St Michael's parish, and that one portion of

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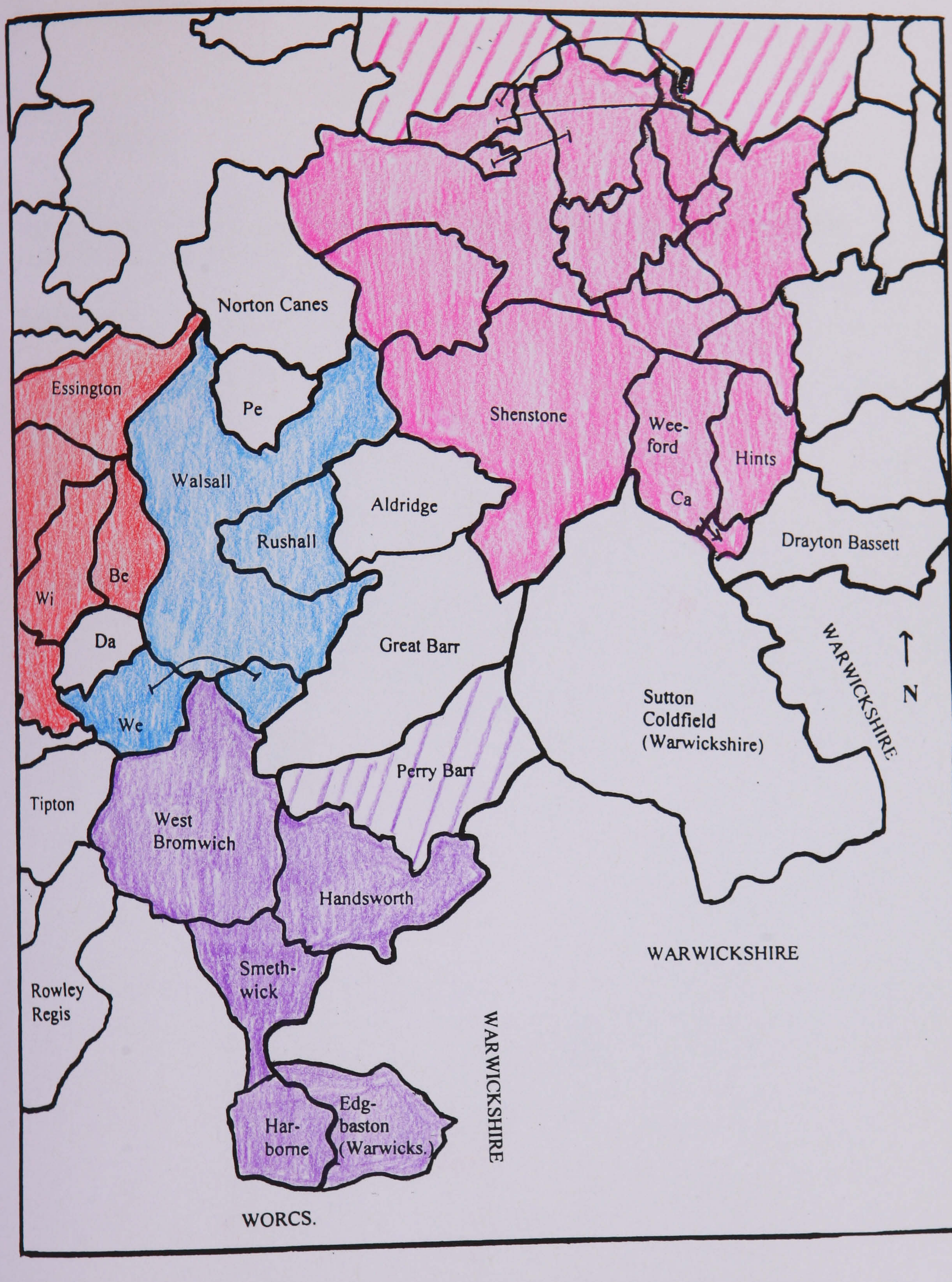
[267] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 46. For Norton's place-name: Horovitz, *The Place-Names*, p. 413; Watts (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary*, p. 443.
[268] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 336; Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, p. 477; Youngs, *Guide*, p. 419.
[269] S 1380; DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 7,9. For further discussion of S 1380: Chapter 3.3.4.
[270] As argued by Steven Bassett: Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', pp. 20-21.
[271] Savage (ed.), *Magnum Registrum Album*, no. 597, pp. 287-88; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 61.



Map 34: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: south east.
Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page

Adapted from R.J.P. Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 531

Key to Map 34

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Harborne

Lichfield, St Michael

Walsall

Wolverhampton

Abbreviations

Be	Bentley
Da	Darlaston
Pe	Pelsall
We	Wednesbury
Wi	Willenhall

Key to Map 34

Scale

0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Harborne

Lichfield, St Michael

Walsall

Wolverhampton

Abbreviations

Be	Bentley
Da	Darlaston
Pe	Pelsall
We	Wednesbury
Wi	Willenhall

Halesowen's annual payment was to be made on the feast of St Michael, raise the possibility that Walsall was once dependent on that church.[272]

7.7.4 Harborne

The high status of Harborne church is shown by its extensive parish, which traversed the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary. Edgbaston (Warwickshire), located immediately east of Harborne, was considered to be its chapel in the 1270s and remained so until it gained a measure of independence at the end of the Middle Ages.[273] The early parochial geography of the areas south and east of Staffordshire's boundary is depicted on Map 36 (with early nineteenth-century parish and township names on Map 35). Handsworth (Staffordshire), which adjoins Harborne to the north, also once belonged to it. Steven Bassett has shown that the rector of Harborne was entitled to an annual payment from the endowment of Handsworth parish, which implies a formerly subordinate position to Harborne. In 1247 it was said that this payment amounted to £2 13s 4d, but the figure was eventually set at £1 6s 4d in 1269.[274]

Handsworth had a chapel at West Bromwich, which indicates that it too had started in life in Harborne's parish. The church at West Bromwich was granted to

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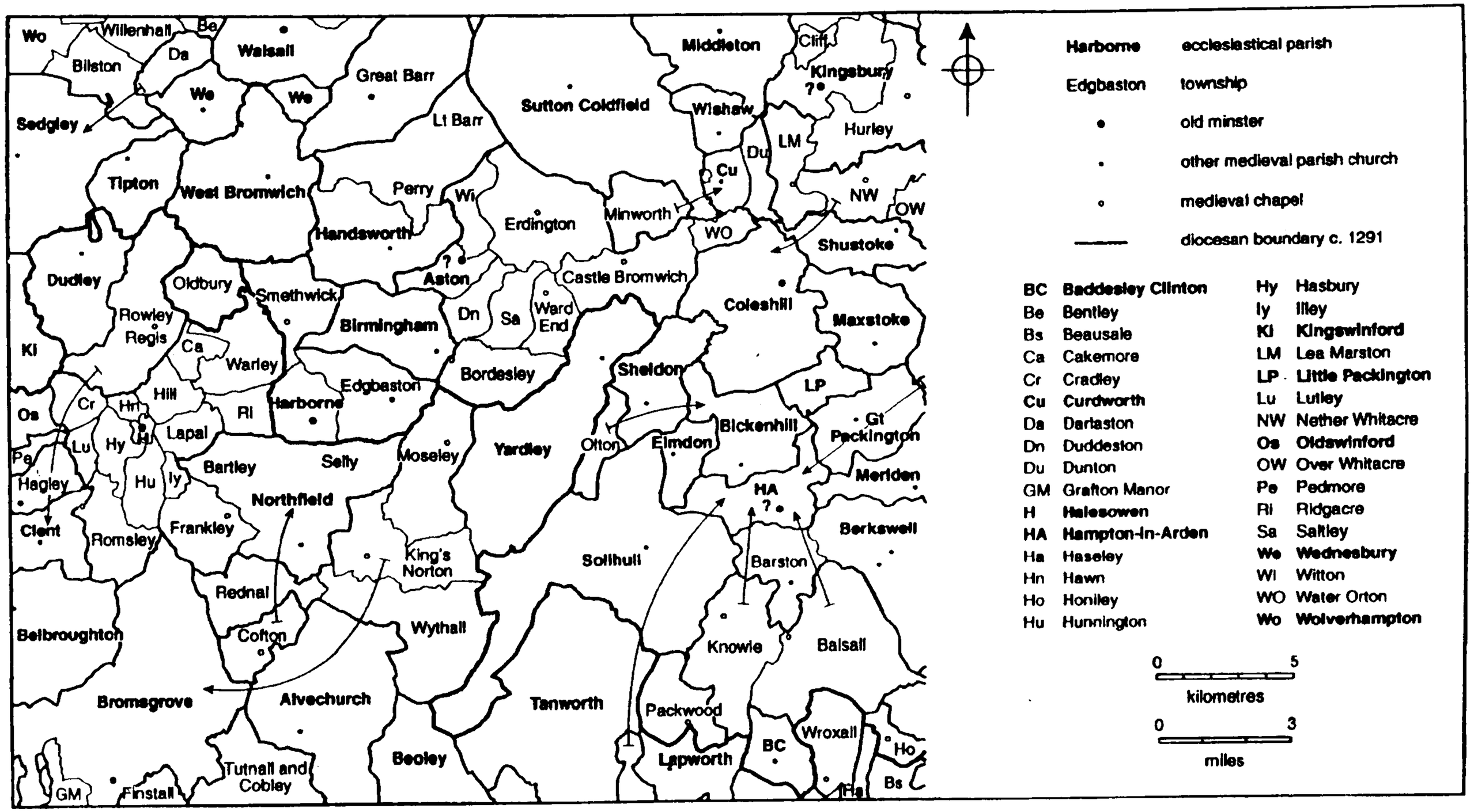
[272] If Walsall was once dependent on St Michael's, Lichfield, then the location of Aldridge, which otherwise shows no links with high-status churches nearby, implies that it may too had belonged to St Michael's, since it would be surrounded by St Michael's to the north and Walsall to the west (and on all sides if Aston and Harborne were originally sub-minsters of St Michael's too: see below, p. 314).

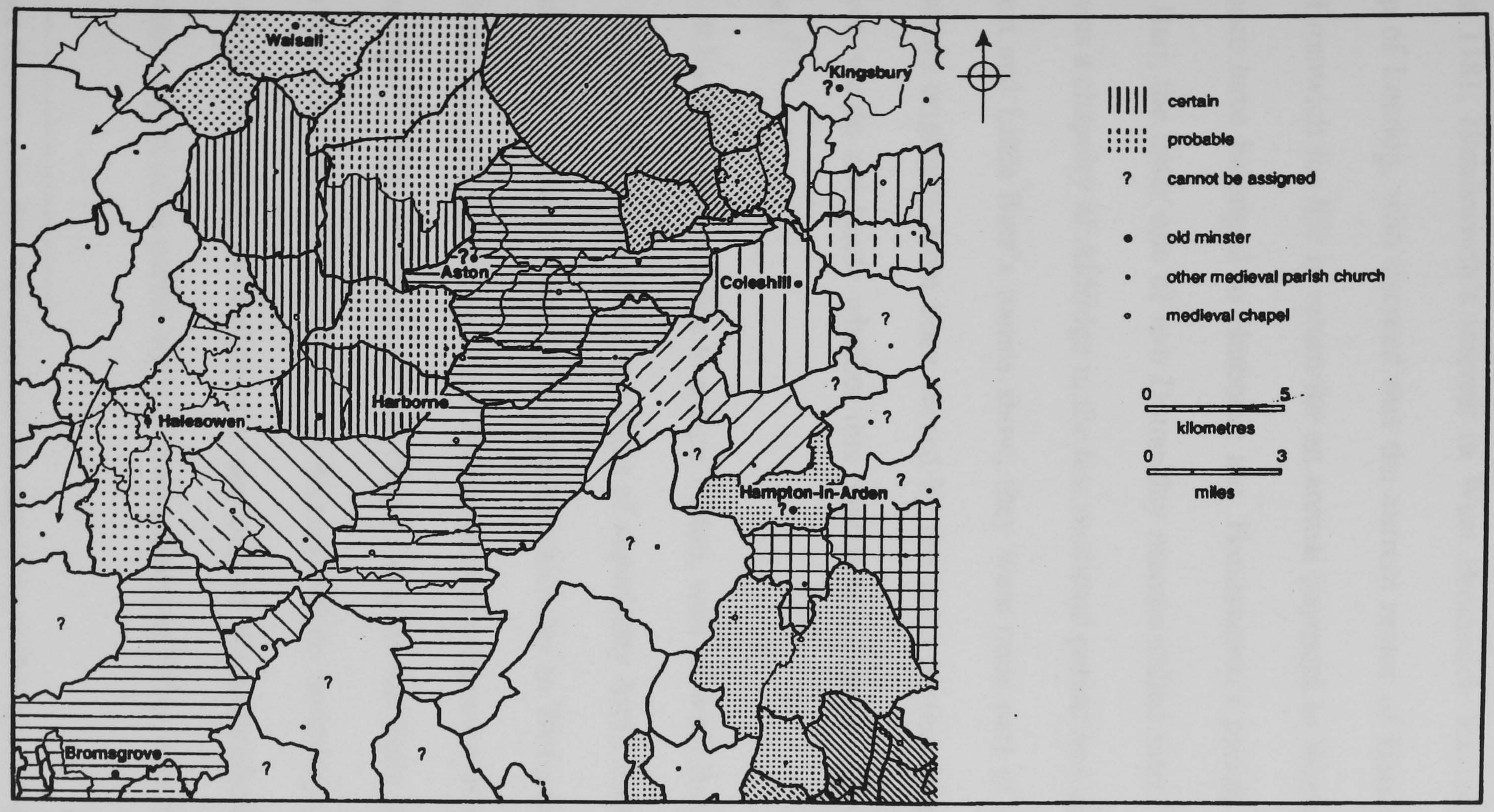
[273] Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 17.

[274] Bassett notes that 'it is conceivable that this dispute and the way in which it was resolved throws no useful light on the original relationship between the two churches. But', he argues, 'if that were so, we should expect Lichfield's register to report the basis of Harborne's claim. Lichfield itself owned the church of Harborne, and so it was in its interest to keep full and accurate records. The fact that it gives no details on this occasion makes the dispute sound like many others which occurred in the late medieval period. Lichfield was asserting its ownership of Handsworth and its income by virtue of its own status as Harborne's mother. Handsworth had plainly slipped out of Harborne's control, come under the local lord's, and begun behaving as if it were an independent parish church – not just for the manor of Handsworth but for Perry and Little Barr too. The settlement of 1269 was a common sense one. The clock was not to be turned back; but the church of Handsworth had to buy its independence by making annual payments to Harborne in compensation for the latter's lost revenues from it': *ibid.*



Map 35: Ecclesiastical parishes and townships in the vicinity of Birmingham at their early nineteenth century extent. Also shown is the boundary between the diocese of Worcester and the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield at its c. 1291 extent. Oldbury was a detached portion of the diocese of Hereford

Source: S.R. Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', *Midland History*, 25 (2000), p. 6



Map 36: Former parochial affiliations in the vicinity of Birmingham

Source: S.R. Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', *Midland History*, 25 (2000), p. 13

Worcester Cathedral Priory in the 1140s but the grant was challenged by Handsworth on the basis that Handsworth was West Bromwich's mother-church. Although a synod at Lichfield initially ruled against Handsworth, its claim was later renewed, and, in 1181, Handsworth's interest in West Bromwich was acknowledged by the Bishop of London, who decreed that the current rector of Handsworth should hold West Bromwich for life in return for an annual payment to Worcester.[275] Great Barr may once have belonged to Harborne too. Handsworth's parish contains Perry and Little Barr, the latter one of two Domesday manors called Barr.[276] The other, Great Barr, was a chapelry of Aldridge in the late medieval period and afterwards, but since, as Great and Little Barr's names show, they were once part of the same land-unit, they would originally have been served by the same mother-church. Unfortunately, however, we do not know whether this church was Handsworth or Aldridge (or its mother).[277]

It has not been possible to assign Tipton, west of West Bomwich, to any high-status church, nor does it show any signs of superiority itself. Further south and west Harborne's parish was surrounded by places which lay in Worcestershire in 1086 and were dependent parochially on the Worcestershire mother-churches of Halesowen and Bromsgrove.[278] Indeed, except in the case of one of the Selly manors, Harborne's parish did not cross the Staffordshire-Worcestershire boundary. Northfield, whose parish is directly south of Harborne's, was part of Worcestershire in 1086.[279] In the northernmost part of its parish were the two manors of Selly, one of which, along with

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[275] Steven Bassett notes that 'the records of the dispute regrettably give no details, and so it is not known what the decision really meant – but it sounds like the final settlement of a genuine but lapsed claim by a mother church over one of its daughters': *ibid.*

[276] DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 12,25; 12,27-12,28.

[277] Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 18.

[278] *Ibid.*, p. 13. See Map 36.

[279] DB, f. 177; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Worcestershire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1982) [hereafter *DB: Worcs.*], 23,2.

its berewick at Bartley Green, belonged to the Bishop of Lichfield until just before 1066.[280] Since Harborne's church was also in Lichfield's hands in the late Anglo-Saxon period (as it was throughout the late Middle Ages),[281] Steven Bassett argues that 'it is likely that it would have served manors in Selly'.[282]

But the identity of Northfield's mother-church is unknown and Bassett argues that Harborne and Bromsgrove are equally strong candidates. Selly's dependence on Northfield church may, for instance, result from a 'capture' from Harborne's, in which case, argues Bassett, Bromsgrove was probably Northfield's mother-church. Alternatively, if Northfield's church originated as a sub-minster of Harborne, it may have served the Selly area from an early date, and so Northfield may have ended up in Worcester diocese because the manors that comprised its parish became attached at an unknown date to an important centre to the south (probably Bromsgrove or Alvechurch). Ultimately, however, Bassett argues that 'none of the rational ways of accounting for [Northfield] church's origins are problem-free. The one safe conclusion which can be drawn is that Selly was originally in the parish of Harborne.'[283]

There are, however, grounds to think that Harborne was once part of a much larger ecclesiastical land-unit which traversed the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary. East of Harborne is a parish focused on the church of Aston (Warwickshire). Aston had at least six chapels by the end of the Middle Ages: Erdington, Little Bromwich, Castle Bromwich, Deritend, Water Orton and Yardley.[284]

While there is no direct evidence that Aston's and Harborne's reconstructed parishes

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[280] DB, f. 177; Thorn & Thorn (eds), *DB: Worcs.*, 23,1; Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 18.
[281] As implied by it being a member of the manor of Lichfield in 1086: DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,22.
[282] Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 18. Bassett's argument regarding Northfield is set out in more detail in *ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
[283] *Ibid.*
[284] *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

had once been part of the same ecclesiastical land-unit, Aston's name (east *tūn*), would conventionally indicate that it was once dependent on somewhere more important to the west. Steven Bassett notes that where such a place is situated is unclear, and that Aston's name may simply mean 'land-unit in the eastern part of the territory'. But in either case, he says, 'there is an unavoidable implication that Aston and its parochial hinterland lay in a larger territory in which the most important place was situated elsewhere'. The most obvious candidate for such a role is Harborne.[285]

But Bassett also shows that there are grounds for thinking that both Harborne and Aston could have originated as sub-minsters of St Michael's, Lichfield. Such a connection between Harborne and Lichfield is suggested by Harborne's membership of Lichfield manor, but the situation at Aston is more complex. In the late twelfth century Gervase Paynel, lord of the manor of Aston, founded a priory at Tickford (Buckinghamshire), to which he gave the church of Aston and its dependencies at Castle Bromwich, Water Orton and Yardley.[286] But despite its lay ownership, Lichfield had a significant proprietary interest in Aston, which, argues Bassett, is best explained as that of its original mother-church. For example, Aston paid an annual pension of £13 6s 4d to Lichfield's dean and chapter in 1291, and such a large sum suggests that Lichfield had rights in Aston church beyond ordinary diocesan ones. The payment originated when a vicarage was established at Aston in the thirteenth century on Tickford priory's behalf. Tickford had been allowed to present to Aston before, in the late twelfth century, but had apparently lost its right to do so: 'the re-establishment of the vicarage came at a considerable price', says Bassett, 'and one

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[285] *Ibid.*, p. 20. He also argues that 'no instance comes to mind of an Anglo-Saxon minster of proven seventh- or early eighth-century foundation at a place with a directional place-name. However, there are many such places with a church which is recognisable as a sub-minster'.
[286] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

which strongly suggests that Lichfield was able to make a good claim to be Aston's mother church.'[287]

If Aston, Harborne and Walsall were all once dependent on St Michael's, then the latter's parish would have been a huge one, stretching south from the Trent to just north of the watershed between the Severn-Avon and Trent systems.[288] The available evidence does not prove the existence of such a territory – and Bassett does not make such a claim – and disentangling the interests of Lichfield cathedral from those of St Michael's church is assuredly difficult. Nevertheless, Lichfield's interest in Aston, Harborne and Walsall cannot be denied, and the reconstructed parishes of all three neighbour places which may have been dependent on St Michael's. Indeed, if such a territory existed, then the lack of correlation between the early parochial geography of this area and the course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary would be unsurprising, as, arguably, the inclusion the whole of St Michael's parish in either shire would have made little sense if Stafford and Warwick were both to be provided with suitably-sized territories.

7.8 Staffordshire's early parochial geography: (vi) the South-West

Much of this part of Staffordshire consists of relatively fertile soils, although Domesday Book implies that it was well-wooded in 1086, particularly in the vicinity of Enville and Kinver.[289] It was seen in Chapter 4 that the Domesday boundary between Staffordshire and Shropshire (and, arguably, Warwickshire too) is obscure in

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[287] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[288] This argument is set out in more detail in *ibid.*, pp. 20-21. Even without the inclusion of Aston, Harborne and Walsall, St Michael's parish was unusually large.
[289] Darby & Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography*, p. 214; also: Chapter 1.2, pp. 4-5.

this area, and so the nearest parts of neighbouring shires will once again be discussed along with parishes known to have been in Staffordshire.[290]

7.8.1 Tettenhall and Wolverhampton

Tettenhall was a collegiate church at the end of the eleventh century, holding two hides of land at that time. Although its Domesday entry is part of Wolverhampton's chapter, whose church was said to hold one hide at Tettenhall in 1086, Domesday Book records that this land did not in fact belong to Wolverhampton, but was held instead in free alms from the king by the church of Tettenhall. The priests of Tettenhall were also said to hold one hide at Bilbrook, later a township within Tettenhall parish (although Domesday does not specify the number of priests in question).[291] Tettenhall retained its collegiate status in the late Middle Ages, and had prebends at Codsall, Pendeford, Perton, Tettenhall and Wrottesley by the mid thirteenth century. In 1535 its prebends also included Bovenhull.[292] It was also a royal free chapel (and royal peculiar) in the late medieval period, a status first recorded in the mid thirteenth century.[293] Of Tettenhall's prebends, Codsall became an independent parish in 1756, but architectural evidence suggests that there had been a chapel there since at least the late twelfth century.[294] Otherwise Tettenhall church still served an extensive parish in the mid nineteenth century, which included the

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[290] See Chapter 4.2, pp. 99-102.
[291] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 7,5. For Bilbrook: Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, p. 471.
[292] M.W. Greenslade, D.A. Johnson and N.J. Tringham in M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume XX: Seisdon Hundred (Part)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. XX*], p. 40; *Valor*, p. 120; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 43.
[293] A.K.B. Evans in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. III*, p. 316.
[294] Pevsner, *Staffordshire*, p. 106; Salter, *The Old Parish Churches*, p. 26.

townships of Bilbrooke, Kingswood, Oaken, and Wightwick.[295] These places are shown on Map 37.

Although Wolverhampton's church is located less than two miles south-east of Tettenhall's, it was likewise of superior status in the late Middle Ages, being a collegiate church both in 1086 and throughout the late medieval period. It was also a royal free chapel.[296] We saw in Chapter 3 that in the late tenth century a certain Wulfrun granted land assessed at 30 hides to Wolverhampton church, at Upper Arley, *Eswich* (perhaps Ashwood in Kinver Forest), Bilston, Wednesfield, Pelsall, *Ocgintun* (perhaps Ogley Hey, near Cannock), Hilton, near Shenstone, Hatherton, Kinvaston, Hilton, near Featherstone, and Featherstone.[297] In 1086 the Canons of Wolverhampton were said to hold all of these places except Bilston.[298] It seems unlikely, however, that Wulfrun's grant delimits Wolverhampton's original parish, since some of the lands mentioned, for example Upper Arley, lie at a considerable distance from that church. Wolverhampton's parish is depicted on Maps 34 and 37.

Wolverhampton's parish was still extensive in the mid nineteenth century, when it comprised the townships of Bentley, Bilston, Hilton, Featherstone, Pelsall, Wednesfield, Willenhall and Wolverhanpton.[299] Many of these places had been part of Wolverhampton's parish since at least the late thirteenth century because the Taxatio records that Wolverhampton church had prebends at Featherstone, Willenhall, Wobaston, Hilton, and Monmore (in Wolverhampton).[300] Chapels at Pelsall and Willenhall were in existence by 1311 and 1328 respectively, and at Bilston by

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[295] Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, pp. 467, 471, 475 & 479. For Codsall: Youngs, *Guide*, p. 408. The presence of a graveyard at Wrottesley in 1294 suggests the existence of a chapel there at that time too: Greenslade, Johnson & Tringham in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XX*, p. 40; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 43.

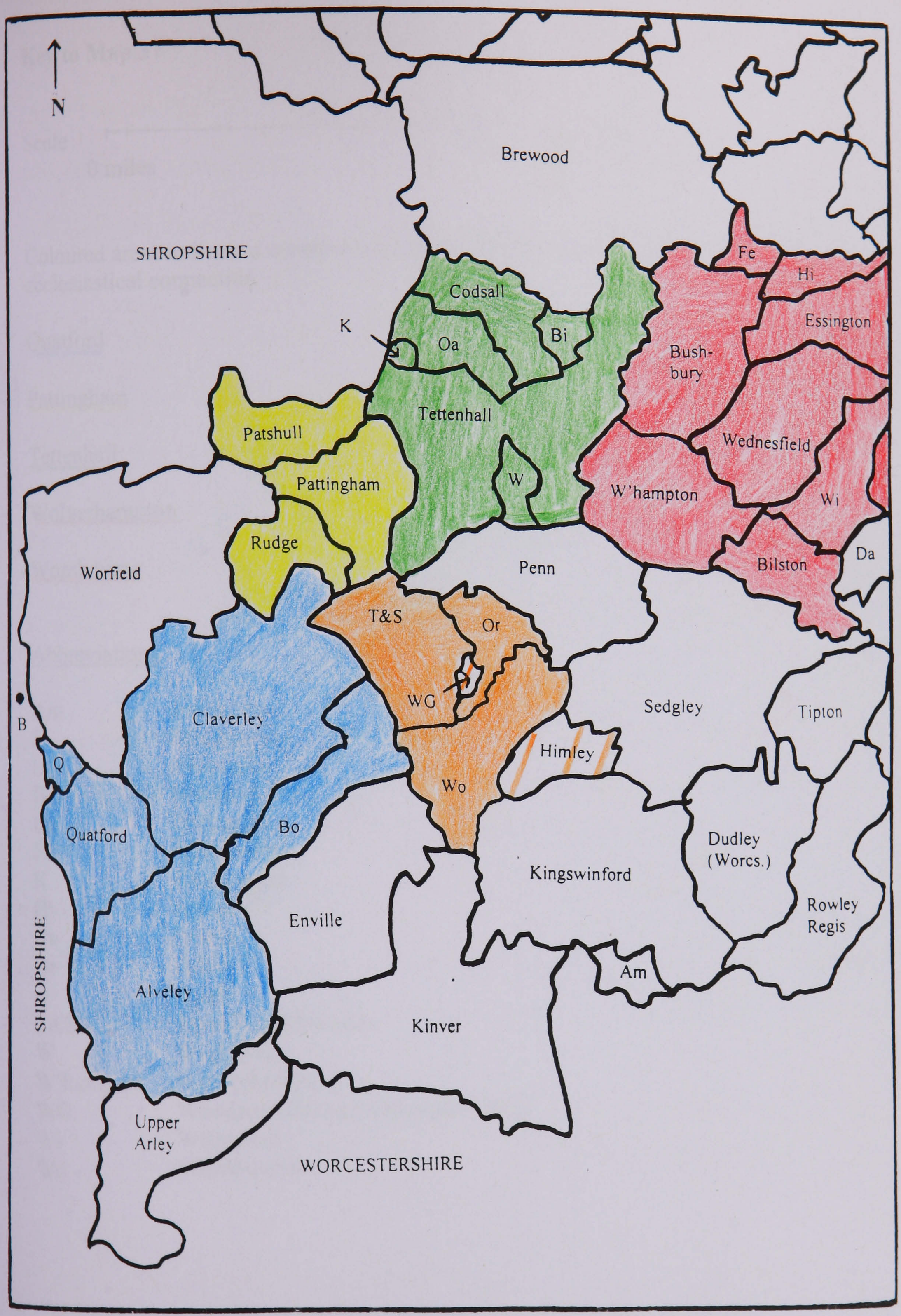
[296] Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, pp. 41-44.

[297] S 1380. For discussion of the charter: Chapter 3.3.4.

[298] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 7,2, 7,6-7,7, 7,9-7,10 & 7,13-7,16. Bilston was held by the king: DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,4.

[299] Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, pp. 471, 475, 477 & 479.

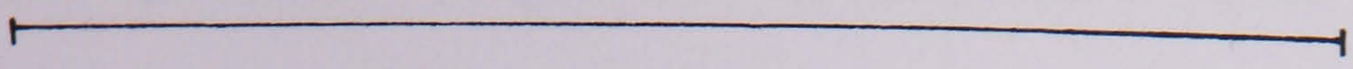
[300] *Taxatio*, p. 243.



Map 37: Staffordshire's parishes in the nineteenth century: south-west. Former parochial affiliations shown. Key on next page. The map includes land that was either wholly in Staffordshire in 1086 or divided between that shire and Warwickshire, but which was later transferred to Shropshire (comprising the parishes or townships of Alveley, Claverley, Quatford, Quatt, Rudge and Worfield). Map adapted from R.J.P Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A CartographicAnalysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 411 & 467

Key to Map 37

Scale



0 miles 10 miles

Coloured areas indicate a certain ecclesiastical connection, hatchings a probable ecclesiastical connection

Quatford

Pattingham

Tettenhall

Wolverhampton

Wombourne

Abbreviations

Am	Amblecoat
B	Bridgnorth
Bi	Bilbrooke
Bo	Bobbington
Da	Darlaston
Fe	Featherstone
K	Kingswood
Hi	Hilton
Oa	Oaken
Or	Orton
Q	Quatt
T&S	Trysull and Seisdon
W	Wightwick
W'hampton	Wolverhampton
WG	Woodford Grange (extra-parochial)
Wi	Willenhall
Wo	Wombourne

1447.[301] All three were also said to be chapels of Wolverhampton church in 1546 and 1548,[302] although it has been seen that topographical evidence suggests that Pelsall may originally have belonged to Walsall's church.[303] There are good signs that Bushbury, and its township of Essington, had also once belonged to Wolverhampton, because the priests of Wolverhampton served the cure at Bushbury during the late medieval period, and because the (Wolverhampton) prebend of Wobaston held considerable land there. Bushbury, however, was a separate benefice in 1291.[304]

Yet considering that many of Staffordshire's superior churches were situated at regular intervals throughout the shire, it is odd that Tettenhall and Wolverhampton should be so close together. It therefore seems likely that one church was a sub-minster founded within the other's parish, and subsequently acquired parochial independence, at, or after, which time it wrested large portions of its mother's parish from that church's control. Although Wolverhampton was the more successful institution in the late Middle Ages, topographical evidence suggests that Tettenhall was probably the earlier church. Tettenhall's church lies on the very eastern edge of its parish, in such a way that implies that it had once controlled land further to the east (i.e. in Wolverhampton).[305] While there are a number of examples of mother-churches standing at the very edge of their original parish because this position was close to a

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[301] For Bilston: *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry VI Volume V: AD 1446-1452* (London: HMSO, 1909), p. 77. For Pelsall: Wedgwood (ed.), 'Inquisitions Post Mortem', 1911, pp. 309-10. For Willenhall: *idem* (ed.), 'Inquistions Post Mortem', 1913, pp. 8-9. See also: Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 45.

[302] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, pp. 335-37.

[303] See above, p. 309.

[304] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 45-46. For Bushbury: *Taxatio*, p. 243.

[305] Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', pp. 47-48. Anne Jenkins argues that place-name evidence may also be significant here. The second element of Tettenhall's name is derived from OE *halh* ('a nook','a corner of land'). 'This', says Jenkins, 'is a topographical element which often denotes early settlement. Wolverhampton, on the other hand, is a name in *tūn*, which characteristically belongs to areas of secondary settlement': *ibid.*, p. 48. Since her thesis was written, however, the extent to which the place-name element *tūn* had a relatively insignificant role in the chronology of Anglo-Saxon place-name creation has been questioned. For example: J. Baker, 'The Distribution of *tūn* Place-Names in Hertfordshire, Essex and Neighbouring Areas', *Journal of the English Place-Name Society*, 36 (2004), pp. 5-22.

major ford crossing the river which formed one side of their parish (as, for instance, was the case at Stratford-upon-Avon), no such major natural boundary divides Tettenhall from Wolverhampton.[306] Indeed, the impression that both churches had once formed part of the same parish is re-enforced by Domesday Book, which records that Wolverhampton held large amounts of land in Tettenhall's parish, at Tettenhall itself and at Trescott.[307] In this case, the aforementioned grant by Wulfrun to Wolverhampton would provide a *terminus ante quem* for the founding of both churches.[308]

7.8.2 Pattingham, Sedgley and Wombourne

The early parochial geography of the area south-west of Tettenhall and Wolverhampton is relatively obscure. Domesday Book implies that parts of this area contained a substantial amount of woodland in the late eleventh-century, and so it may, like North-East Staffordshire, have lain outside the normal territorial framework in existence elsewhere.[309] Indeed, although the area contains are a number of churches potentially of superior status, no one institution is obviously of higher status than the others.

A priest, for instance, appears in the Domesday entry for Sedgley, which is situated directly south of Wolverhampton's reconstructed parish, but Sedgley's church shows no other signs of superior status.[310] A priest is also recorded at the royal manor of Pattingham, which had a dependent chapel at Patshull in the late Middle

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[306] Bassett, *The Origins*, p. 11.
[307] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 7,4 & 7,5; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 47.
[308] Anne Jenkins argues that the parish of Penn, situated immediately south of Tettenhall, includes part of Trescott, which implies that it too may have been part of a parish focused on Tettenhall church: *ibid.*, p. 46.
[309] Darby & Terrett (eds), *The Domesday Geography*, p. 214; Chapter 1.2, pp. 4-5.
[310] DB, f. 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 12,1. Wedgwood postulated that Tipton and Kingswinford may have been dependent on Sedgley, but without indicating why: Wedgwood, 'Early Staffordshire History', p. 193.

Ages. Its nineteenth-century parish also included the township of Rudge.[311] Pattingham shows no other signs of superior status, but is sandwiched between areas focused ecclesiastically on Tettenhall to the north-east and on Quatford to the south-west, raising the possibility that originated as a parochial chapel of one of these churches. A priest also appears in the Domesday entry for Wombourne, which, like Pattingham, adjoins the area dependent on Quatford.[312] In the early nineteenth century Wombourne's parish still included Orton township,[313] but it had once incorporated Trysull and Seisdon too. An inquisition of Bishop Robert Peche (1161-1182) recorded that 'the parish of Trysull and Seisdon' belonged to Wombourne church. A chapel of Wombourne at Trysull was also mentioned in Peche's confirmation of the possessions of Dudley Priory, to which Wombourne had been granted by Guy de Offini in around 1150.[314] Wombourne received part of the tithes of corn and also mortuaries from Himley church in the thirteenth century, implying that it may too have formerly belonged to Wombourne.[315] The small extra-parochial area called Woodford Grange was surrounded on all sides by places which are connected to Wombourne, and so looks to have been carved out of its parish. Finally, Domesday Book records the presence of a priest at Kinver.[316] In 1553 Bobbington was said to be a chapel in its parish, but this church originated as a chapel of Claverley, the latter, we shall see,

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[311] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,28; M.W. Greenslade in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XX*, p. 169; Youngs, *Guide*, p. 419.
[312] DB, f. 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 12,8.
[313] Kain & Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps*, p. 477.
[314] Greenslade, Johnson and Tringham in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XX*, pp. 192 & 217; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 47.
[315] Greenslade, Johnson and Tringham in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XX*, p. 218; Jenkins, 'The Early Medieval Context', p. 47. At the centre of the area dependent on Wombourne was a small extra-parochial place which was added to Trysull parish in 1900: N.J. Tringham in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XX*, p. 225.
[316] DB, f. 246; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,27.

perhaps originally dependent on Quatford.[317] No links between Enville, Kingswinford or Upper Arley and a nearby high-status church have yet come to light.[318]

7.8.3 Quatford

It was seen in Chapter 4 that west of Patshull and Kinver is a block of land which in 1086 was either wholly in Staffordshire, or divided between that shire and Warwickshire, but which, in either case, was later transferred to Shropshire, probably by 1102.[319] Jane Croom has proposed that this area may have once formed a single land-unit which for ecclesiastical purposes was focused on Quatford, or, perhaps, on Worfield.[320]

We know that a church existed at Quatford by the late eleventh century because of the existence of a document, probably drawn up in the thirteenth century, which purports to record its foundation by Roger de Montgomery. The document in question is actually a summary of three or four charters describing the endowment of the church by Roger in 1086-87.[321] The original charters do not survive, but it has usually been argued that they are authentic.[322] They record that Quatford's church was endowed with the manor of Eardington, along with the churches of Claverley (out of whose parish, we have seen, Bobbington's was originally carved) and Alveley.

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[317] Landor (ed.), *Staffordshire Incumbents*, p. 33. N.J. Tringham in Greenslade (ed.), *VCH Staffs. XX*, p. 73.

[318] Kingswinford's name indicates that it was once part of the same land-unit as the Worcestershire parish of Old Swinford, located directly to the south. It is not been possible to assign Old Swinford to a nearby high-status church.

[319] Chapter 4.2, pp. 99-102.

[320] Except for Rudge, which was a township within the parish of Pattingham.

[321] A.T. Gaydon in *idem* (ed.), *The Victoria History of Shropshire Volume II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) [hereafter *VCH Shrops. II*], p. 123, n. 4.

[322] There are no inconsistencies in their witness lists: J.N. Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval and Medieval Human Landscape and Settlement Pattern of South-East Shropshire' (unpublished University of Birmingham PhD thesis, 1989), p.158, following Eyton, *The Antiquities of Shropshire Volume I* (London: John Russell Smith, 1854), pp. 109-12.

Roger's sons Hugh and Philip also gave the manor of Burcot in Worfield.[323] Although the charters profess to record the establishment of an entirely new church at Quatford, Croom argues that they may instead represent the confirmation of lands already held by a pre-existing church, and were perhaps composed because Quatford wanted written proof of its landed endowment.

In this case one might expect to find other records of Alveley's and Claverley's former dependence on Quatford. No such evidence survives, and Croom argues that this may be because Quatford was soon eclipsed in importance by the nearby church of St Mary Magdalene, situated approximately two miles to the north-west, at Bridgnorth.[324] St Mary Magdalene originated as the chapel of Bridgnorth castle, the latter first built by Robert de Bellême in 1102,[325] and was both collegiate and a royal free chapel by the thirteenth century.[326] The deanery served by St Mary Magdalene's college was a compact area surrounding Bridgnorth, a fact which, according to Jeffrey Denton, indicates that the college was probably of pre-Conquest origin, because all except one of the colleges regarded as royal free chapels whose churches were of demonstrable or probable pre-Conquest origin possessed compact areas of jurisdiction, whereas those founded in the twelfth century were given scattered parishes.[327] But since this cannot be true of St Mary Magdalene, which originated as the chapel of a castle built in 1102, Croom argues that 'the status of a royal free chapel may previously have belonged to another church' – that of Quatford.[328] She feels that Orderic Vitalis may provide a suitable context for the transfer of a college and royal peculiar to Bridgnorth, since he records that the

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[323] Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', p. 158. For Bobbington: above, pp. 319-20.
[324] *Ibid.*, p. 159.
[325] *Eadem*, 'The Topographical Analysis of Medieval Town Plans: the Examples of Much Wenlock and Bridgnorth', *Midland History*, 17 (1992), pp. 20-21.
[326] Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, pp. 94 & 135.
[327] *Ibid.*, pp. 135-36.
[328] Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', pp. 157-58.

oppidium 'fortified place' at Quatford was removed to that place.[329] Indeed, that St Mary Magdalene superseded Quatford is further implied by the facts that Eardington and Alveley were prebends of that church and that the dean drew most of his income from the churches of Claverley and Bobbingon (i.e. places granted by Roger to Quatford). Much of the rest came from Bridgnorth's other medieval church, St Mary's.[330]

While this suggests that Alveley, Claverley and Bobbington were once dependent on Quatford, the evidence for Worfield having also been part of the same ecclesiastical land-unit is less direct. Domesday Book records the presence of a priest at Worfield.[331] Croom notes that the ecclesiastical parishes of Alveley, Claverley, Quatford (along with its township of Quatt) and Worfield formed part of the aforementioned block of eight manors held by the Montgomery family in 1086, which were subsequently transferred to Shropshire, probably by 1102.[332] She argues that's Worfield's large parish has the appearance of having been 'eaten into' as new parishes were carved out of it. Croom also notes that the name's second element, derived from Old English *feld* ('open country') is sometimes thought to represent the first areas of pasture taken under the plough by newly settled Anglo-Saxons, which, she suggests, raises the possibility that it, rather than Quatford, was the oldest church in this area. In this case, Quatford would have eclipsed Worfield just as it was later eclipsed by St Mary Magdalene, Bridgnorth. Worfield's appearance of having once been part of the same land-unit as Alveley, Claverley and Quatford may, however,

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[329] *Ibid.*, p. 158. Orderic says that Robert '*oppidum de Quatford transtulit, et Brugiam munitissium castellum super Sabrinam fluvium condidit*' ('moved the fortified town of Quatford, and built a strong castle at Bridgnorth on the river Severn'): M. Chibnall (ed.), *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis: Volume V, Books 9 & 10* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Denton states that Robert de Bêlleme transferred the secular college of Quatford to Bridgnorth in 1098: Denton, *English Royal Free Chapels*, p. 119. A similar point is made by Gaydon: Gaydon in *idem* (ed.), *VCH Shrops. II*, p. 124.
[330] *Ibid.*; Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', p. 159.
[331] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 9,1.
[332] Chapter 4.5.2, pp. 99-102

simply relate to all four parishes, along with Rudge, having been transferred to Shropshire by 1102, and Croom accepts that her view is merely a hypothesis, and that these parishes may simply represent land given to the Montgomery's in this area.[333]

Nevertheless, the area north of Worfield was limited by places dependent on Shifnal and to the west by the River Severn, beyond which lay the mother-church parish of Morville.[334] These areas can be seen on Map 26. To the east the situation is more obscure, and the possibility that Pattingham and Wombourne originated as chapels of Quatford cannot be discounted.[335] The churches to the south of Kinver and Upper Arley were part of Worcester diocese, and so are arguably unlikely to have originally been connected to Quatford's church.[336]

7.9 Assessing the relationship between Staffordshire's secular and ecclesiastical administrative landscapes

The above reconstruction of what Staffordshire's mother-church parishes may have looked like in the late Anglo-Saxon period has been undertaken in order to compare the extents of those parishes, in general terms, with the layout of the shire's hundreds in 1086. While more work is needed to reconstruct Staffordshire's early parochial geography fully, some valuable conclusions can nevertheless be drawn.

The pattern of mother-church parishes found in lowland Staffordshire is reminiscent of that in other lowland parts of the West Midlands. This, combined with the tortuously complex parochial (and, as was seen in Chapter 2, manorial) geography of North-East Staffordshire, supports Steven Bassett's model that marginal land lay

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[333] Croom, 'The Pre-Medieval', pp. 160-63. For the significance of *feld*: M. Gelling, *Place-Names in the Landscape* (London: Dent, 1984), p. 325; M. Gelling & A. Cole, *The Landscape of Place-Names* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000), pp. 269-74.
[334] For Morville: Croom, 'The Fragmentation', p. 73. For Shifnal: above, pp. 279-80.
[335] DB, ff. 246, 248 & 249; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 1,28 (Pattingham), 8,1-8,3 (Claverley, Kingsnordley & Alveley), & 9,1 (Worfield), 12,8 (Wombourne).
[336] *Taxatio*, p. 217.

outside the regular territorial framework that existed in lowland areas.[337] It is unfortunate that our reliance on late medieval sources means that distinguishing between Staffordshire's late Anglo-Saxon mother-churches and sub-minsters is difficult. Nevertheless, while many of the shire's high-status churches can only be shown to have been of superior status in the late Middle Ages, there are positive signs that some were important in the late Anglo-Saxon period, and in some cases probably before that time too. Eccleshall's name, for instance, suggests the presence of a pre-Anglo-Saxon church; Hanbury may have been associated with the cult of Wærburh prior to the tenth century; Lichfield, St Michael had an extremely large parish (and an exceptionally large one if it incorporated Aston, Harborne and Walsall), and like Eccleshall may have been of pre-Anglo-Saxon origin; Stone too had very large parish (which would have been exceptionally large if it once included Checkley and its dependencies). If, as seems likely, Wolverhampton's church was founded in Tettenhall's parish in the late tenth century, this would mean that Tettenhall was another late Anglo-Saxon mother-church. Penkridge's (albeit late recorded) pre-Conquest royal patronage suggests the same for that church, as, perhaps, may Stafford's association with the cult of Bertelin – although we have seen that the origins of the latter church are equally as likely to be bound up with Æthelflæd's building of defences at Stafford in 913.[338]

The chapter's conclusions are necessarily constrained by the fact that it has not been possible to reconstruct the landscape of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds or that of its late Anglo-Saxon mother-church parishes fully. Yet there are areas, notably in Central-West and North-West Staffordshire, where enough can be said

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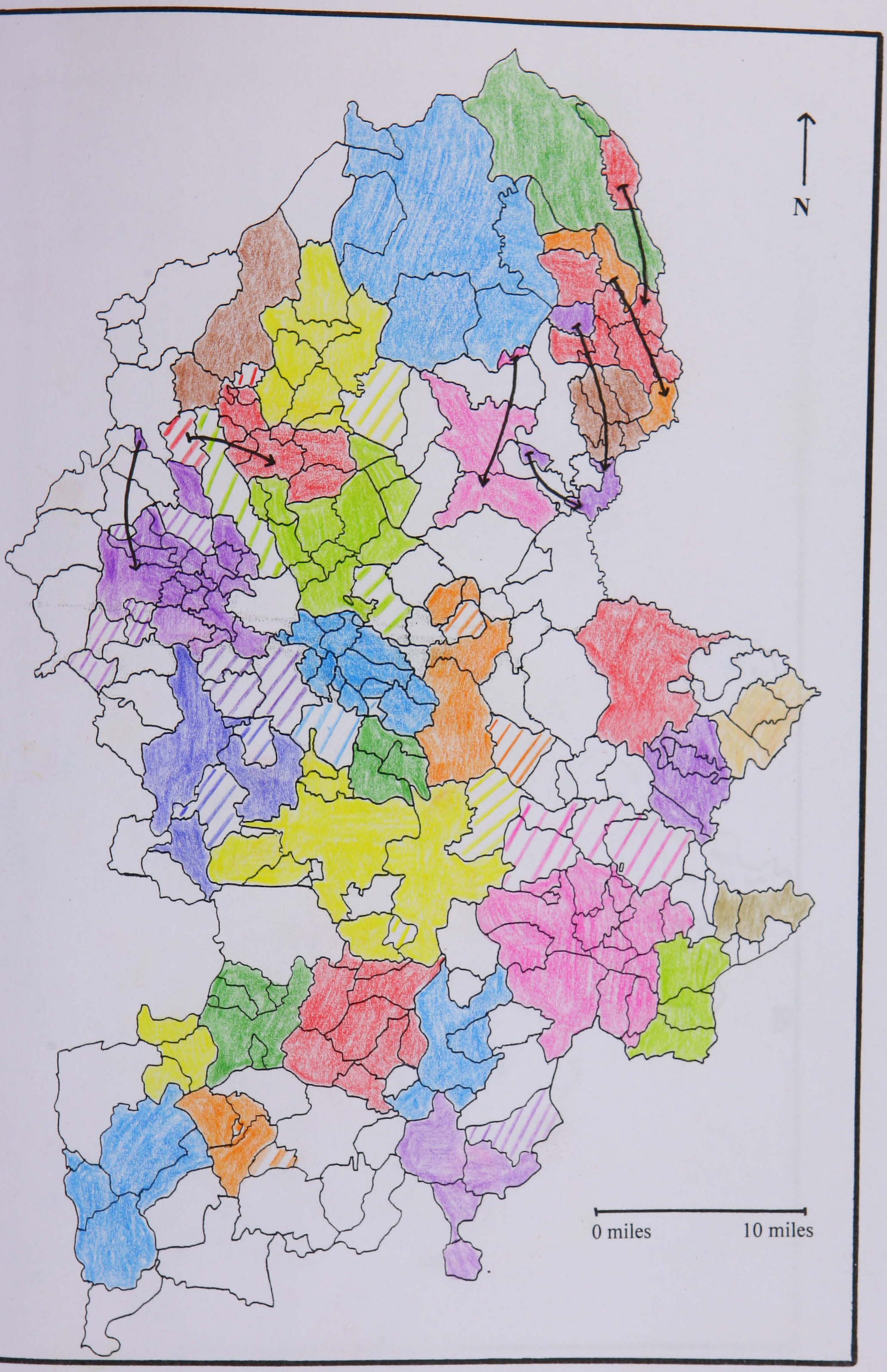
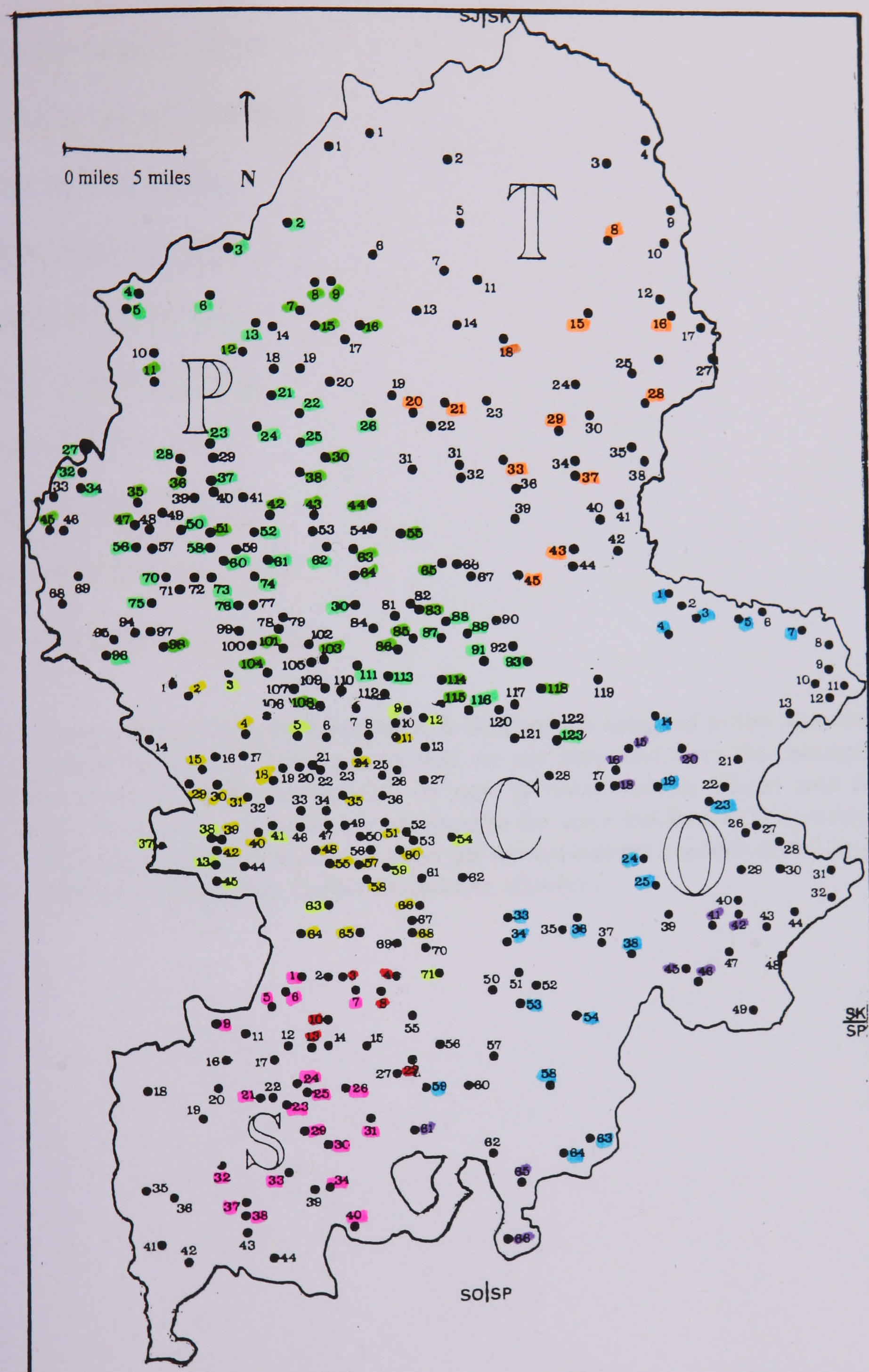
[337] Bassett, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 16. See also above, pp. 248-50; Chapter 2.

[338] Ilam's association with the cult of Bertelin may imply that it too was a late Anglo-Saxon mother-church, but we have seen that its origins are difficult to determine. Tamworth is associated with the cult of Eadgyth, although it has been argued that this association may well have been of post-Conquest origin.



Map 38: Former parochial affiliations in Staffordshire: overview.
For parish names and keys to the coloured sections, see Maps 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34 & 37.

Adapted from R.J.P. Kain & R.R. Oliver (eds), *The Tithe Maps of England and Wales: A Cartographic Analysis and County-by-County Catalogue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) pp. 411 & 467



Map 39: Places assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources. To see the courses of thirteenth-century and later hundredal boundaries, see Maps 5 & 6. Key to colours on next page.

Adapted from A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976)

Key to Map 39

Cuttlestone hundred: certain

Cuttlestone hundreds: probable

Offlow hundred: certain

Offlow hundred: probable

Pirehill hundred: certain

Pirehill hundred: probable

Seisdon hundred: certain

Seisdon hundred: probable

Totmonslow hundred: certain

Totmonslow hundred: probable

Places said to have certainly belonged to a hundred are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources and are not separated from the corresponding hundred rubric in the Domesday text by any 'problem' entries. Places said to have probably belonged to a hundred are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources but are separated from the corresponding hundred rubric by one or more 'problem' entries. For further discussion: chapter 2.

about both landscapes for meaningful conclusions to be drawn. Indeed, it is also significant that, by and large, least can be said about the early parochial geography of the parts of the shire where it was seen in Chapter 2 that least could be said about the layout of its Domesday hundreds. What is not known, however, is whether the secular and ecclesiastical administrative landscapes of these areas had always been relatively complex, or whether they had merely become complex by the time that we are first able to map them.

It was not possible to assign many Domesday manors in North-East Staffordshire to a hundred and so a meaningful comparison cannot be made with the early parochial geography of that part of the shire. But the reconstruction of its early parochial geography has still been useful because the comparatively complex picture that has emerged strengthens the view that this area's hundredal landscape may have been similarly complex, and therefore that the layout of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds was perhaps less tidy than previous studies have implied.[339]

A relatively large number of Domesday manors spread across Central-West and North-West Staffordshire, can, however, be assigned to Pirehill hundred, because they are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources (although many can only be said to have probably belonged to Pirehill hundred in 1086).[340] Some correlation between the early parochial and hundredal landscapes of this area can therefore be shown because the reconstructed parishes of Colwich-and-Stowe, Eccleshall, Stafford, Stoke, Stone, Trentham and Wolstanton for the most part only incorporate places that were in Pirehill hundred in 1086. An overview of Staffordshire's mother-churches can be found on Map 38. Places that are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources are shown on Map 39. Some

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[339] Chapter 2.5, pp. 65-66.
[340] See Chapter 2.5, pp. 61-64.

of these mother-churches may, of course, have been sub-ministers in origin, but none of them appears to have been connected with high-status churches whose parishes contain significant numbers of manors that are known to have belonged to a different hundred in the late eleventh century (although it is always possible that such links once existed but did not survive to be recorded in late medieval sources). Had this been the case, it would have suggested that there was a poor degree of correlation between late Anglo-Saxon mother-church parishes and hundredal boundaries in this part of Staffordshire.

Nevertheless, more can be said about the hundredal affiliation of Domesday manors in some of these parishes than in others. For example, there is a strong grouping of places that probably belonged to Pirehill hundred in 1086 in the area that can confidently be assigned to Stone's parish, that is the manors of Aston and Stoke-by-Stone, Hilderstone, Meaford, Moddershall, Normacot, Tittensor and Walton. Most of the Domesday manors in Stoke's and Trentham's extended parishes were also probably in Pirehill hundred in 1086, although there are a number of places near the centre of Stoke's parish that cannot be assigned to any hundred.

Yet the convergence between the layout of the two administrative geographies is sometimes less strong: if Caverswall's church were once dependent on that at Stoke, then Stoke's parish would fall partly into Totmonslow hundred, since the Domesday manor of Caverswall can confidently be assigned to that hundred in 1086. The same is true for Stafford, where most of the Domesday manors within its parish were either certainly or probably within Pirehill hundred in the late eleventh century (i.e. Creswell, Hopton, Ingestre, Salt, Tillington, Tixall and Yarlet). Rickercote, however, seems to have been within Cuttlestone hundred at that time. Having said that, Rickerscote was part of Castle Church parish, which, we have seen, although

dependent on Stafford in the late Middle Ages, may not have originally belonged to that church. The other two Domesday manors that fell within Castle Church parish, Burton and Silkmore, cannot be assigned to any hundred, because they are listed under a Totmonslow hundred rubric in the Domesday text but were later in Cuttlestone hundred.[341] The parishes belonging to Colwich-and-Stowe and Wolstanton did not incorporate any Domesday manors that can be assigned to hundreds other than Pirehill, although there are admittedly a number of places in and immediately east of Colwich-and-Stowe's reconstructed parish that cannot be assigned to any hundred in 1086.

It has been seen that Seighford was probably once dependent on Eccleshall's church. Although Eccleshall's and Seighford's reconstructed parishes do not incorporate any manors that were certainly part of other hundreds in 1086, both parishes contain a significant cluster of places that cannot be assigned to any Domesday hundred, which suggests that there may have been less correlation between hundreds and parishes in 1086 there. This situation may, however, be explained by the Bishop of Chester's influence in this area. Most of the places in Seighford's parish that cannot be assigned to a late eleventh-century hundred (Aston, Coton Clanford and Doxey) were part of the Bishop of Chester's Domesday manor of Seighford,[342] and, similarly, most of the places in Eccleshall's parish (Adbaston, Gerrard's Bromley (i.e. Bromley township), Podmore, Swynchurch (in Chapel Chorlton township), Tunstall and Walton) were members of his manor of Sugnall.[343] Their position in the Domesday text is set out once again in the Table 8.

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[341] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 11,6; White, *History*, p. 144.
[342] DB, f. 247 (Seighford); Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,21 (Seighford).
[343] DB, f. 247 (Sugnall); Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,20 (Sugnall) & 11,5 (Brough Hall). For the position of Brough Hall within Ranton's parish: Cockin, *Old Parish Boundaries*, p. 118. Although Knighton was member of the manor of Sugnall, it was part of the parish of Mucklestone, located on the border between Staffordshire and Shropshire.

It may be significant that both Seighford and Sugnall are listed under an Offlow hundred rubric in Domesday Book: i.e. the hundred in which Lichfield itself was situated, but were part of Pirehill hundred in the late Middle Ages. We know that elsewhere in the West Midlands there was a trend in the late Anglo-Saxon period for cathedrals and other major churches to consolidate as many of their possessions as possible in their own hundreds so that they were under their own administrative control.[344] It is therefore plausible that this had happened at Seighford and Sugnall too – i.e. that prior to 1066 the Bishop of Lichfield had drawn these places into his 'own'

Table 8: The final seven entries in the Bishop of Chester's Domesday chapter

Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.* reference	**Domesday manor**	**Late medieval hundred**
-	In OFFLOW Hundred	
2,16	Lichfield (with the members of Packington, Hammerwich, Stytchbrook, Norton Canes and Wyrley, Rowley)	Offlow
2,17	Coley	Pirehill
2,18	Moreton (near Colwich?)	Pirehill?[345]
2,19	Drointon	Pirehill
2,20	Sugnall (with the members of Gerrard's Bromley, Podmore, Tunstall, Swynchurch, Walton, Adbaston, Wootton, Knighton)	Pirehill
-	(space)	
2,21	Seighford (with Aston and Doxey, Bridgeford, Coton Clanford)	Pirehill
2,22	Lichfield (with the members of Packington, Tamhorn, Handsacre, Hints, Yoxall, Pipe Ridware, Weeford, *Burouestone*, *Litelbech*, Freeford, *Timmor*, Harborne, Smethwick, Tipton)	Offlow

hundred of Offlow (or, alternatively, had arranged for these manors to be part of that hundred when hundreds were created in the Staffordshire area), and that they were moved to Pirehill hundred at some unrecorded point before the thirteenth century, when we next glimpse Staffordshire's hundredal geography. In this case, they, along with Coley, Moreton and Drointon (all in the parishes of Colwich or Stowe) would

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[344] Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape', pp. 162-64; *idem*, 'Anglo-Saxon Birmingham', p. 11.
[345] For discussion of the identification of the 'Staffordshire Moretons': Appendix 1.

appear to have been scattered 'islands' of Offlow hundred in 1086. Yet although in this instance we have good grounds for thinking that the geography of Staffordshire's Domesday hundreds may have been less tidy than is usually argued, in the absence of further evidence this must remain an unsubstantiated hypothesis: indeed, we cannot discount the possibility that the Domesday scribe simply incorrectly assigned Seighford and Sugnall to Offlow hundred. But whatever was the situation at Seighford and Sugnall, the bishop's manors of Bishop's Offley and Eccleshall, which made up much of the remainder of Eccleshall's mother-church parish, were within Pirehill hundred in 1086.[346]

Ultimately, since many Domesday manors in Central-West and North-West Staffordshire cannot be assigned to a hundred, two alternatives for the relationship between the early parochial and hundredal geographies of this part of the shire present themselves. The first is a somewhat untidy picture whereby, although each mother-church parish contained much land that was in Pirehill hundred, some or all of those Domesday manors whose hundredal affiliation in 1086 is uncertain were detached 'islands' of different hundreds. Alternatively, if those manors whose Domesday hundredal affiliation is uncertain belonged to Pirehill hundred in 1086, then there would be an exceptionally neat and straightforward relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical geography of this part of Staffordshire. In either case, however, it is clear that there was at least some correlation between the secular and ecclesiastical administrative landscapes of this area.

This is true for much of the rest of the shire, and, indeed, for the shire boundary itself, which for the most part did not cut across mother-church parishes. South of Eccleshall and Stafford, for instance, we know that there were a sizeable

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[346] DB, f. 247; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 2,10-2,11.

number of manors that certainly or probably were within Cuttlestone hundred in 1086, which correspond relatively well with the combined geographical extent of the reconstructed parishes of Gnosall and Penkridge. In Central-East and South-East Staffordshire, however, the situation is more complex. All the Domesday manors in the area that can be shown to have been part of Hanbury's reconstructed parish, were certainly or probably part of Offlow hundred, although it has not been possible to associate Abbot's Bromley, whose church could also have been dependent on Hanbury, to any Domesday hundred. There is also a very strong concentration of Offlow manors in the area that falls within the known minimum extent of the mother-church parish belonging to St Michael's, Lichfield (i.e. the area excluding Aston, Harborne and Walsall). Little, however, can be said about the Burton area because few Domesday manors there can be assigned to a hundred, and the same is true for the area around Tamworth.[347]

Further south, most of the Domesday manors in the Staffordshire portion of Harborne's parish can be shown to have been in Offlow hundred. But in South-West Staffordshire the situation is less straightforward. It is not known to which hundred many of the places in Wolverhampton's mother-church parish belonged in 1086 because the Canons of Wolverhampton's chapter in the Staffordshire Domesday folios contains no hundred headings until two thirds of the way through its entries. Wolverhampton's dependency at Bushbury, however, was probably part of Seisdon hundred; conversely, however, Bushbury's township of Essington was within Cuttlestone hundred in the late eleventh century. Tettenhall, on the other hand, was firmly located within a group of manors which can mostly be shown to be in Seisdon hundred in 1086. None of the places in Cuttlestone hundred located immediately

[347] See chapter 2.5, p. 66.

north of Tettenhall (i.e. Brewood and Chillington, both within Brewood parish) show any signs of dependency on Tettenhall's church, although they cannot be assigned to any other high-status church, and so the possibility that they were once part of Tettenhall's parish cannot be discounted. Unfortunately, little can be said reliably about the rest of South-West Staffordshire. Immediately to the south of Tettenhall's reconstructed parish is an area whose earliest parochial geography has proved elusive, and so cannot be compared meaningfully to the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086. Further west we find a group of manors whose Domesday hundred is unknown because they were later transferred to Shropshire, meaning that their late eleventh-century hundredal affiliations cannot be compared with those of the late Middle Ages.

7.10 Conclusions

So where does this leave us in terms of the models for the origins of Staffordshire's hundreds set out above?[348] In those parts of the shire where enough can be said about the likely layout of late Anglo-Saxon mother-church parishes and Domesday hundreds for meaningful conclusions to be drawn – i.e. mainly in the areas that came to be known as Cuttlestone and Pirehill hundreds in the thirteenth century and afterwards, and parts of the future Offlow hundred – there is a fair degree of correlation between Staffordshire's late Anglo-Saxon secular and ecclesiastical administrative landscapes, and so it is reasonable to conclude that the layout of the two landscapes was clearly connected in some way. This picture corresponds with what has been found in other parts of the West Midlands, and so there are no reasons for thinking that lowland Staffordshire was outside the territorial framework that existed elsewhere in the region. Yet even in those parts of the shire for which we have

[348] See pp. 241-43.

good evidence, the relationship between hundreds and mother-church parishes is not straightforward: indeed, we have seen that although many of the shire's mother-church parishes can be shown to contain a significant number of manors that were in a single hundred in 1086, some could also have incorporated detached 'islands' belonging to other hundreds.

The relationship between the shire's early parochial geography and that of its hundreds therefore leaves open three of the models set out above. Firstly, it is possible that Staffordshire, its hundreds and its mother-church parishes were created according to a single administrative plan, in which a close correspondence between the boundaries of different types of administrative land-unit was an important factor. Alternatively, the relationship could indicate either that the layout of the shire's hundreds reflected that of a pre-existing landscape of mother-church parishes, or that the shire's parochial geography reflected that of its hundreds. Unfortunately, however, no firm evidence has been found which suggests that one type of land-unit must have preceded the other, and so it is not possible to argue definitively for either of these alternatives.

It is therefore a great pity that more cannot be said directly about the date when Staffordshire's mother-church parishes came into being. No mother-daughter relationships have been found which can have arisen *only* before the tenth century, and the layout of mother-church parishes reconstructed above could therefore comfortably have originated in a parochial system created in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Nevertheless, no evidence has been uncovered that shows that they did originate at that time, and in view of the evident antiquity and importance of some of the churches surveyed in this chapter, the possibility is still a real one that some of Staffordshire's mother-church parishes had been in existence a long time before the

shire's hundreds were formed. The reconstructed mother-church parishes mapped above could therefore alternatively suggest the existence of a relatively small number of very large and very early mother-church parishes, focused on places such as Eccleshall and Lichfield, whose churches and, conceivably, parishes could even be of pre-English origin. It has been seen that the subordination of St Chad's church at Stowe (Lichfield) to Lichfield St Michael's and Eccleshall's name raise the possibility that the latter two churches were of pre-Anglo-Saxon origin, and both show signs of perhaps once having served exceptionally large parishes Under these circumstances the shire's late medieval ecclesiastical landscape could partly reflect its original layout, but also show the effects of the subsequent foundation of other, less important, superior churches, which resulted in the fragmentation of the earlier parochial geography. In this case the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds would have been influenced by, or at least reflected, that of a pre-existing landscape of mother-church parishes.

Such an explanation for the origins of Staffordshire's parochial landscape, however, is merely a hypothesis. Indeed, to further our understanding of the origins of the shire's mother-church parishes detailed work needs to be done on the early ecclesiastical landscape of Cheshire, in order to gain a clearer idea of the reasons for the apparent contrast between the two shires.[349] We also need to consider why a parochial landscape that, presumably, was originally similar in both areas arguably changed more in parts of Staffordshire than it did in Cheshire. That is to say, we need to consider why a layout of large mother-church parishes focused on a central church seems to have remained essentially intact until the nineteenth century in Cheshire, but did not do so in Staffordshire. There is no easy solution to this problem. It could be

[349] See above, pp. 262-66.

argued that Staffordshire's early parochial geography is most reminiscent of Cheshire's in lowland parts of the shire, for instance at Eccleshall, and so mother-church parishes were most likely to survive intact on better quality land. But this solution does not seem all that convincing when we consider that the four extensive Cheshire mother-church parishes that neighbour Staffordshire are situated on the shire's least productive land, and that their layout is markedly different to the early parochial geography of much of North-East Staffordshire (which was similarly agriculturally marginal).[350] Alternatively, John Blair has noted that Cheshire and Lancashire appear to show an exceptional correlation between mother-church parishes and hundreds, with each hundred usually comprising two or three interlocking parishes. He suggests that 'post-Viking reorganization, perhaps begun by Æthelflæd and developed through the tenth century, created this exceptional symmetry'.[351] If true, however, this raises the issue of why there are no signs of a similar process of reorganisation having occurred in Staffordshire.

Returning to the issue of Staffordshire's origins, the correlation that can be shown between Staffordshire's secular and ecclesiastical administrative landscapes in some parts of the shire reinforces the view that considerations other than providing each hundred with a certain tax assessment are likely to have been important when the shire came into being. Indeed, the possible division of Eccleshall's and Seighford's parishes between Offlow and Pirehill hundreds implies that powerful landholders, in this case the Bishop of Lichfield, may have been able to manipulate the layout of Staffordshire's hundredal landscape at its inception, or did so afterwards. Once again this suggests that the circumstances that influenced both the creation of the shire, and

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[350] H.C. Darby & I.S. Maxwell (eds), *The Domesday Geography of Northern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 381-83.
[351] Blair, *The Church*, p. 309.

its early history and development, were much more complicated than scholars have previously proposed.

CONCLUSION

It has been seen that previous work on shire origins in the West Midlands has operated within two basic hypotheses. The first is that the region's shires were effectively created on a 'blank slate', either in a landscape in which there were no existing sub-provincial territories, or in one in which existing administrative territories were ignored when shire boundaries were first laid out. The other is that the West Midland shires reflect pre-existing administrative land-units, or represent the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units. This study has found no firm evidence to support either model, and it would therefore be easy to argue that its findings have been ultimately disappointing. But this is not the case. The thesis has examined the origins of the West Midland shires in more detail and with greater rigour than has any previous study, and significant progress has been made in our understanding of their territorial origins and early history. Moreover, the thesis has confronted, and explored in detail, a number of important methodological issues that we face in the study of the origins and development of the English medieval administrative landscape – issues which hitherto either have not been acknowledged by scholars, or have not been considered in sufficient detail. It has also placed our knowledge about the circumstances that led to the creation of shires in the West Midlands on a more secure footing, by showing that the origins of the region's shires are far less straightforward than most scholars have argued.

In relation to methodology, the thesis has shown that our evidence for the origins and development of the English medieval administrative landscape is often far more difficult to interpret than is usually believed. One of the study's most significant

findings relates to the use of Domesday Book for reconstructing the geography of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086. Reconstructions of late eleventh-century hundreds and wapentakes from the evidence of Domesday Book often serve as the basis of views on, amongst other things, the formation of shires and the origins of the English medieval parochial landscape. But Domesday Book's evidence for hundredal affiliations in Staffordshire is so opaque that it has not been possible to map the layout of the shire's hundreds in 1086 fully. This raises the possibility that the source's evidence for hundredal affiliations in other shires may be similarly opaque, and suggests that we may not even be able to use it as an agreed basis for mapping late eleventh-century hundreds and wapentakes in all shires. Indeed, the study of Staffordshire's territorial origins suggests that if we are to further our understanding of issues such as the formation of shires, or the origins of England's medieval parochial landscape, the difficulties in interpreting the evidence of Domesday Book must be confronted fully, and areas of uncertainty acknowledged.

The thesis has likewise reinforced the view that there are no substantive grounds for applying the boundary defined in the late ninth-century 'peace' made between Alfred the Great and Guthrum to the West Midlands, and has demonstrated that reliably assessing the geographical extent of Scandinavian rule in the Midlands in the later ninth and early tenth centuries is a more complex task than is usually acknowledged. Moreover, it has shown that the Scandinavian raids that occurred at this time may mark a watershed in our understanding of the territorial history of Lichfield diocese, and that using the late thirteenth-century evidence of the Taxatio Ecclesiastica to throw light on the pre-tenth-century layout of the diocese is less straightforward than is often supposed. The study of Staffordshire's origins also suggests that assessing whether individual shires experienced a general reduction in

their hidage assessments between the late Anglo-Saxon period and the time of Domesday Book may be more difficult than is usually argued, and has also shown that reconstructing the layout of late Anglo-Saxon land-units from the evidence of charter boundary clauses is less straightforward than some scholars suggest.

The thesis has reinforced the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach in the study of the origins and development of the English medieval administrative landscape. For instance, the discussion of excavations at Tamworth in Chapter 5 reinforces the potential usefulness of archaeological evidence for the study of places and periods about which written sources yield little information. Furthermore, the value of topographical evidence was demonstrated in Chapter 7, when a comparison between the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086 and its early parochial landscape – so far as either can be mapped – resulted in new light being thrown on the origins of the shire's hundreds. The study has also highlighted some issues that would benefit from further investigation. For instance, more research is needed of the early parochial landscape of Staffordshire and Cheshire, as we need to consider in detail why the layout of mother-church parishes in adjacent shires seems to have been very different at their earliest known extents. Most importantly, however, the study has shown that more detailed research is needed into the layout of hundreds and wapentakes in England in the late eleventh century, and the issue of how far the difficulties involved in reconstructing the layout of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds from the evidence of Domesday Book reflects wider trends must be considered as a matter of some urgency.

The investigation of shire origins in the West Midlands at the level of a single shire has also allowed a more complex analysis of this historical problem to emerge than

has previously been the case. The traditional model for Staffordshire's origins falls within the first of the hypotheses for the formation of the region's shires set out above, and proposes that the shire was created according to an administrative scheme that dictated that each of its hundreds would carry a 'tax' assessment of a round number of hides. But this model cannot be shown to have operated in practice for three reasons. Firstly, we saw in Chapter 2 that it is not possible to reconstruct the layout of Staffordshire's hundreds in 1086 fully and therefore calculate accurately the number of hides attached to each at that time. Secondly, it was seen in Chapter 3 that it is not known if the *c.* 500 hides carried by Staffordshire at the time of Domesday Book necessarily reflect its original 'tax' assessment (and there are, in any case, signs that some Staffordshire manors may have experienced a reduction in their geld quota between the late tenth or early eleventh century and 1086). And, thirdly, Chapter 7 provided grounds for thinking that the layout of the shire's hundreds in the late eleventh century was perhaps less tidy than scholars have previously argued: for example, Seighford and Sugnall may have been detached sections of Offlow hundred in 1086 that were moved to Pirehill hundred by the thirteenth or fourteenth century. These problems do not, however, show that such an administrative scheme cannot have operated in the shire; rather, they show that the available evidence does not allow us to assess reliably whether or not it did. Nevertheless, the questions of how far the West Saxon or English kings would have been able to impose such a rigid system of administration, apparently without any reference to pre-existing administrative structures or vested interests in the Staffordshire area, and how far it would have best served their aims to do so, are open to debate.

We saw in Chapter 4 that although there is arguably a certain topographical 'logic' to Staffordshire's earliest known geographical extent, as the shire was limited

in the north and south by agriculturally marginal and upland areas in which several shires converge (Cheshire, Derbyshire and Staffordshire in the north, and Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the south), there are no signs that it was a wholly coherent territory in respect of its relationship with the natural landscape. Staffordshire does not, for instance, represent an easily identifiable single natural region; had it done so, this would have suggested that a close correspondence with the natural landscape was perhaps the most important criterion in determining the shire's geographical extent, and therefore that it was arguably created on a 'blank slate'.

Equally, however, the second of the hypotheses set out above cannot be shown to have operated in Staffordshire, as there is no definitive evidence that the shire reflected pre-existing administrative land-units, or represented the amalgamation or reworking of such land-units. This is because very little can be said reliably about the layout of administrative arrangements in the Staffordshire area prior to the formation of shires in the West Midlands, and so we are rarely able to compare the layout of Staffordshire and its hundreds to pre-existing administrative territories in a meaningful way. But the study has found no reason to think that the shire's original geographical extent bore no relation to earlier territories, and so the possibility that it reflected, or grew out of, pre-existing administrative structures remains a real one. This is for three reasons. Firstly, given that there is strong evidence that Tamworth had a defensive circuit by the early ninth century, and considering the pre-tenth-century obligation of landholders to provide men for the manning and maintenance of fortified places, the possibility that Staffordshire's original geographical extent was influenced by a pre-existing landscape of territories attached to fortified places in the area remains open (although if so, the course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire

boundary through the heart of the Anglo-Saxon fortified area at Tamworth shows that a radical change must have been made to such administrative structures in the Tamworth area).[1] Secondly, it was seen in Chapter 4 that there are no reasons to believe that Staffordshire's boundary followed a wholly random course in respect of the pre-existing layout of Mercian provinces. And, thirdly, in view of the evident antiquity and importance of some of the churches in Staffordshire discussed in Chapter 7, the likelihood that the shire's Domesday hundreds reflected pre-existing parochial arrangements is also a real one.

Lying behind the binary opposites present in previous scholarship, and which have been utilised throughout this study as a useful framework for the discussion of Staffordshire's origins (i.e. that the shire either was effectively created on a 'blank slate' or reflected pre-existing administrative arrangements), may be an even more complex picture. It is possible that more than one of the explanations for Staffordshire's origins explored throughout the thesis influenced its original geographical extent. That is to say, when Staffordshire was created its extent may, for instance, have partly reflected pre-existing military structures in the area, but only so far as doing so allowed Stafford to be provided with a coherent territory, and did not reflect them at all in the vicinity of Tamworth, whose administrative status was to be downgraded. Something similar could be true for the shire's hundreds, whose extent could have partly been influenced by pre-existing administrative arrangements and important vested interests in the Staffordshire area, but partly also by the roles and functions that the hundreds were to serve.

Finding a context to account for the shire's creation is therefore most difficult. Irrespective of whether Staffordshire was effectively created on a 'blank slate' or

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[1] See Chapter 4.3.4, p. 111.

reflected pre-existing administrative arrangements, we do not know when the shire came into being. Two contexts have been offered for the formation of shires in the West Midlands, and nothing has been found in this study that invalidates either possibility for Staffordshire. It has been seen that C.S. Taylor proposed that the region's shires may have been created for what he termed 'military purposes' in response to the Scandinavian incursions of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, and to facilitate the provision of ships which, as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records, were ordered to be built '*ofer eall Angelcyn*' ('all over England') in 1008.[2] Alternatively, many scholars have argued that the extension of more direct West Saxon control over the West Midlands in the early tenth century, or the creation of a polity called 'the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' in the later ninth, offers a suitable context for the formation of shires in that region.

The course of Staffordshire's boundary in the vicinity of Tamworth suggests that the extension of more direct West Saxon control over the West Midlands provides the most appropriate context for the shire's creation. This process offers a plausible context for Tamworth being divided between Staffordshire and Warwickshire, and for the downgrading of its administrative role that resulted from this division. That is to say, both the formation of shires in the West Midlands, and the decision that Tamworth would not only fail to become a shire town but also have its administrative significance drastically downgraded by having the boundary between Staffordshire and Warwickshire bisect the Anglo-Saxon fortified area, could

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[2] C.S. Taylor, 'The Origin of the Mercian Shires', in H.P.R. Finberg (ed.), *Gloucestershire Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1957) [originally published in 1898], pp.. 22-24. For 1008: Anglo-Saxon Chronicle [hereafter ASC], MSS 'C', 'D' & 'E', 1008. OE text: K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume V: MS. C* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*], p. 92; translation: D. Whitelock (ed.), *English Historical Documents Volume I* c. *500-1042* (London: Eyre Methuen, 2nd edn, 1979) [hereafter *EHD I*], p. 241. Also: G.P. Cubbin (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VI: MS D* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1996) [hereafter *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*], p. 54; S. Irvine (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume VII: MS. E* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), p. 66. See Chapter 1.

plausibly be seen as part of the West Saxon monarchy's attempts to consolidate their hold on the West Midlands. Furthermore, arguably the most likely time for such an 'anti-Mercian' policy to have been enacted is in or soon after 919, i.e. the year after Edward the Elder is said to have '*gerad*' ('taken' or 'occupied') Tamworth and when Æthelflæd's daughter, Ælfwynn, is said to have been '*ælces anwealdes on Myrcum benumen*' ('deprived of all authority in Mercia') and removed to Wessex.[3] Indeed, such a context could account for Staffordshire's creation irrespective of whether the shire was effectively created on a 'blank slate' or reflected pre-existing administrative arrangements.

This model is admittedly not problem-free. If the West Midland shires were created in the early tenth century, and if, from the start, they fulfilled the same administrative functions as they did at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, then it is perhaps surprising that they are not mentioned in written sources until the early eleventh century. On the other hand, the dearth of pre-eleventh-century documentary references to the West Midland shires does not mean that they must have only recently been created at that time. The above model is also somewhat at odds with the concept of the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' recently proposed by Simon Keynes, which was discussed in Chapter 5: that is to say, had Wessex and Mercia been effectively part of the same political unit for around 40 years in 919, such an 'anti-Mercian' policy would perhaps have been unnecessary. But evidence was presented in

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[3] For 918: ASC, MS. 'A', 918; J.M. Bateley (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume III: MS A* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1986), pp. 68-69; Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 216. For 919: ASC, MSS, 'B', 'C' & 'D', 919; Old English text: O'Brien O'Keeffe (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. C*, p. 76; translation: Whitelock (ed.), *EHD I*, p. 217. Also: S. Taylor (ed.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume IV: MS B* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983), p. 50; Cubbin (ed.), *ASC: Collaborative: MS. D*, p. 41. See also Chapter 6.3. The ideas in this paragraph draw on those presented by Steven Bassett and David Hill: S.R. Bassett, 'The Administrative Landscape of the Diocese of Worcester in the Tenth Century', in N.P. Brooks & C. Cubitt (eds), *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 155-57; D.H. Hill, 'The Shiring of Mercia – Again', in N.J. Higham & D.H. Hill (eds), *Edward the Elder 899-924* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 145.

Chapter 5 which suggests that the relationship between the rulers of Wessex and Mercia in the later ninth and early tenth centuries was, at the very least, more complex than the 'kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons' model implies, and perhaps shows that for much of that period Æthelred and Æthelflæd enjoyed the sole rule of the Mercians, albeit subject to heavy West Saxon overlordship. Moreover, it is hard to view the course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary (through the heart of the Anglo-Saxon defended area at Tamworth) in the context of anything other than an 'anti-Mercian' policy, or the consolidation of West Saxon power: i.e. Tamworth's administrative role presumably could have been downgraded without it being divided between two shires in such a striking way.[4]

It has, however, been seen that the decision that Tamworth would not become a shire town undoubtedly had an important bearing on Staffordshire's territorial origins. Tamworth is a little over 20 miles south-east of Stafford, and so had it also become a shire town any shire territory focused on Stafford would not have been of the same shape as Staffordshire. This is because if both Stafford and Tamworth had been the focus of shires, the south-eastern boundary of Stafford's shire would certainly not have bisected, or followed a course very close to, Tamworth. Alternatively, it is possible that if Tamworth had been given a shire Stafford would not have become a shire town at all. Indeed, whatever the reason for the course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary at Tamworth, the downgrading of Tamworth's status clearly worked to Stafford's advantage.

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[4] Simon Keynes adopts a more neutral position in relation to Tamworth and says only that 'the boundary between Staffordshire and Warwickshire runs through the middle of Tamworth, suggesting that Tamworth had given way to Stafford and Warwick as administrative centres, and that the status of the principal centre of the old Mercian regime was no longer respected': S. Keynes, 'Edward, King of the Anglo-Saxons', in Higham & Hill (eds), *Edward the Elder*, p. 59.

This thesis has reinforced the importance of local or regional studies in furthering our understanding of the origins of the English medieval administrative landscape. For instance, some of the complexities and difficulties in making sense of Staffordshire's territorial origins and early development might not have emerged so clearly had the geographical focus of the study been much wider. It has been seen throughout the thesis that two areas in Staffordshire seem to stand outside the normal territorial framework in existence elsewhere in lowland England. These are parts of North-East Staffordshire and the Tamworth area. The shire boundary followed an unusual course in both places: in North-East Staffordshire the boundary ran in two straight lines south-westwards and south-eastwards from the shire's extreme northern tip, with nothing marking this section of the boundary on the ground in the nineteenth century except occasional boundary stones; in Tamworth the course of the Staffordshire-Warwickshire boundary bisected the Anglo-Saxon fortified area and nineteenth-century town. Moreover, very little of the Domesday hundredal geography of either area can be reconstructed reliably, and the earliest known parochial geography of both areas is atypical. The explanation for this situation is probably different in both places. North-East Staffordshire is a predominantly upland and agriculturally marginal area and so seems to have lain outside the territorial framework that operated in lowland areas; conversely, the most likely explanation at Tamworth is that its atypical status results from the decision that its administrative role was to be downgraded, and that it would not become a shire town. The thesis has therefore once again shown that only through detailed local or regional studies will we further our understanding of the origins and development of the English medieval administrative landscape and of the institutions and communities that used it.

APPENDIX 1: THE 'STAFFORDSHIRE MORETONS'

It was seen in Chapter 2 that identifying entries in the Staffordshire Domesday folios can be difficult on those occasions where several places in the shire share the same name and similar late eleventh-century forms. Since we are rarely able to track the manorial descent of Staffordshire manors from the time of Domesday Book into the better-documented late Middle Ages, identifications usually seem to have been made on the basis of the position of the entry in question within the Domesday text. This is because there is often a certain 'geographical logic' to the ordering of many entries within the Staffordshire Domesday folios: that is to say, places often occur in the text near to manors that they are geographically close to.

This appendix will explore some of the issues that surround identifying the Staffordshire Moretons from the evidence of Domesday Book, and in assigning the entries in question to a hundred. The Staffordshire Domesday folios contain four entries which have been identified as relating to places now called Moreton, yet nowadays there are only three Moretons within the county: one is to be found in the centre of the county in the vicinity of Colwich; another is close to the county's western boundary, near Gnosall; and the third Moreton is near to Hanbury, next to the boundary between Staffordshire and Derbyshire. But scholars have rarely explained the basis of their decisions regarding either the identification of the Moretons, or the hundreds to which they believe the places in question belonged in 1086. It will, however, be seen that both identifying the Moretons and assigning them to hundreds is more complicated than previous scholarship has implied.

The first of Domesday Book's Moretons appears in the survey as *Moretone* and was held of the Bishop of Chester by a certain Nigel in 1086. Scholars have identified this Moreton as being the one located close to Colwich [hereafter referred

to as the 'Colwich Moreton 1'], probably because its Domesday entry is 'sandwiched' between two other entries for places close to Colwich, Coley and Drointon.[1] The entry has been associated with another one which also appears as *Moretone* in the Domesday text and was said once again to be held by a certain Nigel [hereafter referred to as the 'Colwich Moreton 2'], although on this occasion the Nigel in question did so as tenant-in-chief.[2] The basis for linking these two entries therefore seems to be that both entries relate to land held by a man named Nigel and the spelling of Moreton is identical in each. Scholars have thus implied that the entries refer to two parts of the same vill, with Nigel holding land that carried a tax assessment of two carucates from the Bishop at the 'Colwich Moreton 1', while holding one hide directly at the 'Colwich Moreton 2'. This could be true, although since the 'Colwich Moreton 2' occurs after two entries relating to places geographically distant from Colwich, Thorpe Constantine in South-East Staffordshire and Kingsley in the north-east of the shire, its position in the Domesday text cannot be used to support this hypothesis.

Assigning either of the entries to a hundred in 1086 is problematic. The 'Colwich Moreton 1' appears in a list of manors assigned to Offlow hundred by Domesday Book, but scholars have firmly located both it and the 'Colwich Moreton 2' in Pirehill hundred, in spite of the latter entry not being in any way associated with a hundred in the Domesday text. The lands held by Nigel as tenant-in-chief appear at the foot of the final Staffordshire Domesday folio and in an unusual form. The first of Nigel's three holdings, at Thorpe Constantine, follows the standard format employed by the scribe within the shire. It occurs at the very bottom of the third of four columns

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[1] Domesday Book [hereafter DB], f. 247; A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976) [hereafter *DB: Staffs.*], 2,17-2,19. For the layout of this section of Domesday Book: Chapter 2.4, p. 59.
[2] DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), DB: Staffs., 16,3.

on folio 250 in Great Domesday Book, and, being the first of Nigel's holdings as tenant-in-chief, appears directly underneath a chapter heading and number, copied out using red vermillion.[3] Unusually, the remainder of Nigel's holdings – concerning lands at Kingsley and the 'Colwich Moreton 2' – are not placed at the head of the next (i.e. fourth) column on the folio. Instead, they appear underneath the fourth column, separated from the final entry in that column by a small space. The entry for the 'Colwich Moreton 2' is positioned directly below that for Kingsley, and both entries are associated by the scribe with his land at Thorpe Constantine in two ways. Firstly, both begin '*Idem Nigellus tenet*' ('the same Nigel holds…'); and, secondly, the scribe ignored his usual conventions here, and placed the entries for Kingsley and the 'Colwich Moreton 2' directly adjacent to the right-hand margin of the entry for Thorpe Constantine, and thus within the space that he usually left between columns.[4]

The scribe presumably wanted to ensure that Nigel's lands were treated as a single block of text: that is to say, having read the entry for Thorpe Constantine the reader would then move onto Nigel's next holding, at Kingsley, rather than going straight to the top of the next column as normal. The most likely explanation for this seems to be that all three entries in Nigel's chapter were added after the 'main' campaign of writing on this folio. There seems to be a small but significant difference in the scribe's hand in all three of Nigel's entries, as his strokes here appear to be slightly thinner than elsewhere on the folio, and the entries are a slightly different colour to those in the rest of the folio. The entries for Kingsley and the 'Colwich Moreton 2' therefore appear to have been included in the only space available – underneath the final two columns in the Staffordshire folios, but in such a way as to

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[3] DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 16,1. For the layout of the text on this folio: *The Staffordshire Domesday* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1991).

[4] DB, f. 250; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 16,1-16,3. Unfortunately this is not well conveyed in the Farley manuscript which lists Kingsley and the 'Colwich Moreton 2' after the next chapter (for the King's thegns), creating the impression that Chapter 17 was 'sandwiched' between the lands belonging to Nigel.

group the three entries together. The unusual position of Nigel's chapter within the Domesday text may account for why there are no hundred headings within that chapter. But scholars have usually assigned both it and the 'Colwich Moreton 1' to Pirehill hundred, doubtless because a place named Moreton situated near to Colwich was part of Pirehill hundred in the late medieval period.[5]

There is another entry for a place rendered as *Mortone* in the Staffordshire Domesday folios, which was held by a certain Benedict of Earl Roger de Montgomery in 1086. It has been identified as Moreton near Gnosall [and will hereafter be referred to as the 'Gnosall Moreton']. It was assigned to Cuttlestone hundred by Domesday Book – an association which has been accepted by scholars.[6] The final 'Moreton' entry appears as *Mortune* in Domesday Book. In 1086 it was held by a certain Alchere of Henry de Ferrers, and has been identified as the Moreton near to Hanbury [hereafter the 'Hanbury Moreton']. Domesday Book assigned this entry to Offlow hundred, which has been accepted as correct by scholars too.[7] This information, along with the incidences of places named 'Moreton' in late medieval sources, is outlined in Table 9. The table immediately raises a number of problems. In many cases a manor can be identified in Domesday Book and later sources on the basis of its name alone, particularly if has an unusual or obviously distinct name, thus allowing its hundredal affiliation can be tracked from 1086 through the late Middle Ages with a good degree of certainty.[8] But the similarity in the forms for the Staffordshire Moretons means that the manors in question cannot be distinguished by their names alone. We

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[5] C.F. Slade, 'Introduction to the Staffordshire Domesday', in L.M. Midgley (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume IV: Staffordshire Domesday and West Cuttlestone Hundred* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958) [hereafter *VCH Staffs. IV*], p. 57; F.R. Thorn, 'Hundreds and Wapentakes', in [no named ed.] *The Staffordshire Domesday*, p. 24, n. 4. Hawkins and Rumble do not assign the 'Colwich Moreton 2' to any hundred: Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 16,3.
[6] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 8,7.
[7] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 10,8.
[8] For example, Alrewas: Chapter 2.3.2, p. 47.

Table 9: The 'Staffordshire Moretons'

Name	Domesday Book [form]	Hundred Rolls (*c.* 1255)[9] [form]	Feudal Aids[10] [form, date]	Lay Subsidy (1334)[11] [form]
'Colwich Moreton 1'	Offlow [*Mortone*]	-	Pirehill [*Morton*, 1284-85]?	Pirehill [*Moreton*]?
'Colwich Moreton 2'	- [*Mortone*]	-	Pirehill [*Morton*, 1284-85]?	Pirehill [*Moreton*]?
'Gnosall Moreton'	Cuttlestone [*Mortone*]	Cuttlestone [*Morton*]	Cuttlestone [*Morton*, 1284-85]? Cuttlestone [*Morton*, 1316]?	Cuttlestone [*Morton*]?
'Hanbury Moreton'	Offlow [*Mortune*]	-	-	-

therefore need to use other means of identifying the Staffordshire Moretons, by assessing whether it is possible to trace their tenurial descents from 1086 onwards.[12]

We have most detailed information regarding the 'Gnosall Moreton', which fortunately is located in a part of Staffordshire that has been surveyed by the *Victoria County History*. By 1166 the tenant of the 'Gnosall Moreton' was a certain Hemming de Moreton. The manor appears to have remained in the de Moreton family's hands throughout much of the late medieval period. In 1242 its tenants were Michael and James de Moreton and in 1284-85 *Feudal Aids* records that a place called '*Morton*' in Cuttlestone hundred was held by Michael and Walter de Moreton.[13] If 'de Morton' was a family name (rather than a useful shorthand used for whichever person at Moreton held the manor), then by tracing the tenurial descent of the 'Gnosall Moreton' we can track a distinct identity for this manor until as early as 1166. Furthermore, given that hundredal boundaries were generally stable by the late

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[9] *Rotuli Hundredorum temp Hen. III and Edw. I Volume II* (London: The Record Commission, 1818).
[10] *Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids Volume V: Stafford-Worcester* (London: HMSO, 1908).
[11] R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).
[12] The names of all three Moretons in Staffordshire are derived from OE *mor* ('marsh', 'fen') and *tūn*: D. Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood: David Horovitz, 2005), p. 395.
[13] Midgley in *eadem* (ed.), *VCH Staffs. IV*, p. 120; *Feudal Aids*, p. 2.

thirteenth century – i.e. the first occasion after Domesday Book when the manor is associated with a hundred – it also seems reasonable to assume that the 'Moreton' assigned to Cuttlestone hundred in *Feudal Aids* is indeed located near to Gnosall, which was also in Cuttlestone hundred in the late Middle Ages.[14] But this information does not definitively link the late thirteenth-century manor to the 'Gnosall Moreton' of Domesday Book – it is only an assumption that the two are the same, albeit a reasonable one considering that its entry is 'sandwiched' in the Domesday text between those for Knightley and High Onn, both also located close to Gnosall.[15]

Information about the tenurial descent of the 'Colwich Moretons' is provided by the sixteenth-century antiquarian Sampson Erdeswick, who published a genealogy for the family of Nigel, perhaps landholder of both 'Colwich Moretons' at the time of Domesday Book, from 1086 until the sixteenth century. Regrettably Erdeswick did not make the source of his information clear, nor did he specify whether he meant only to provide a genealogy of Nigel's descendents or intended to outline the tenurial descent of the 'Colwich Moretons' as well.[16] Yet the latter seems the more likely: the Gresley family, to whom Erdeswick indicates that this Moreton passed within a couple of generations after 1086, certainly held a place called Moreton in Pirehill hundred in 1284-85.[17] It therefore may be possible to trace the tenurial descent of a Moreton manor at Colwich from Domesday Book into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Nevertheless, Erdeswick's account does not confirm that the 'Colwich Moreton' was divided into two parts, either in Domesday Book or afterwards.

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[14] If 'de Moreton' was not a family name then we cannot track its tenurial descent and so all that can safely be said is this manor was in Cuttlestone hundred by the end of the thirteenth century. But even if 'de Moreton' was not a family name in 1166 it is very likely that it was so by the end of the thirteenth century (and it seems a reasonable assumption that it was earlier too).

[15] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), *DB: Staffs.*, 8,6-8,8.

[16] S. Erdeswick, *A Survey of Staffordshire Containing Antiquities of the County; Edited with Corrections and Additions by the Revd. Thomas Harwood* (London: John Nicholas & Son, 1844), pp. 207-08.

[17] *Feudal Aids*, p. 6.

Conversely, very little is currently known about either the late medieval hundredal associations or the tenurial descent of the 'Hanbury Moreton'. Its tenurial descent is not mentioned by any of Staffordshire's antiquarian writers, and nor is a 'Moreton' associated with Offlow hundred in any of our usual late medieval sources.[18] Its identification in Domesday Book has therefore presumably been based on of its appearance immediately after Fauld in Domesaday Book, also located near to Hanbury. Yet this is not a sound basis for identifying the 'Hanbury Moreton': the next entry in the Domesday text is for Chebsey, located around ten miles north-north-west of the Moreton near Colwich, i.e. sufficiently close as to raise the possibility that the entry for *Mortune* relates to that Moreton instead.[19]

So where does this leave us? A direct link between the Moretons that appear in Domesday Book and in our late medieval sources can only be identified in the case of the 'Colwich Moreton' – although this link is admittedly based on the work of a sixteenth-century antiquarian whose information cannot be verified. The tenurial descent of the 'Gnosall Moreton' can be traced as far back as 1166, but this manor cannot be definitively linked with Benedict's holding of 1086. It has not been possible to trace the tenurial decent of the 'Hanbury Moreton' at all, and the appearance of its entry immediately before Chebsey in the Domesday text raises the possibility that this entry in fact related to the Moreton near to Colwich.

While it has therefore not been possible to identify the Staffordshire Moretons across all of our sources with certainty, it has nevertheless been seen that there are good grounds for thinking that the place called Moreton assigned to Cuttlestone hundred by Domesday Book and in later sources relate to the Moreton near to Gnosall, and that one or both of the Domesday entries concerning land at Moreton

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[18] As discussed in Chapter 2.3.1, p. 44.
[19] DB, f. 248; Hawkins & Rumble (eds), DB: Staffs., 10,6-10,9.

held by a certain Nigel relates to the 'Colwich Moreton'. The so-called 'Hanbury Moreton' must, however, remain unidentified. But if we are to identify the 'Staffordshire Moreton's and assign them to a Domesday hundred with more certainty, a detailed investigation into the tenurial descent of each manor is required. Indeed, it once again seems that the traditionally coherent and tidy reconstructions of Staffordshire's late eleventh-century hundreds mask many of the complexities involved in mapping the shire's hundredal landscape of 1086 reliably.

APPENDIX 2: HUNDREDAL AFFILIATIONS RECORDED IN DOMESDAY BOOK AND IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY AND LATER SOURCES

Table 5 in Chapter 2 lists those places in Staffordshire that are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in later sources. This appendix sets out the data upon which Table 5 is based by comparing the hundredal affiliations recorded for places in Staffordshire named in Domesday Book with those recorded in thirteenth-century and later sources. It does not show the post-1086 hundredal affiliation of every place named in the Staffordshire Domesday folios: that is to say, places which make no appearance in the later sources surveyed below do not appear in the table unless they are assigned to the same hundred in Domesday Book as in nineteenth-century sources. This is because there is usually a good correlation between Staffordshire's hundredal arrangements in the late medieval period and early nineteenth century, and so it is reasonable to assume that hundredal affiliations in the early nineteenth century reflect those of the late Middle Ages.

Abbreviations: hundred names

C	Cuttlestone
O	Offlow
P	Pirehill
S	Seisdon
T	Totmonslow

Abbreviations: sources

BoF	*Liber Feodorum: The Book of Fees Part II: AD 1242-1293* (London: HMSO, 1923)
DB	Domesday Book
DB Staffs.	A. Hawkins & A.R. Rumble (eds), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976)

FA	*Inquisitions and Assessments Relating to Feudal Aids Volume V: Stafford-Worcester* (London: HMSO, 1908)
HR	*Rotuli Hundredorum temp Hen. III and Edw. I Volume I* (London: The Record Commission, 1812)
LS	R.E. Glasscock (ed.), *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975)
PR	G. Wrottesley (ed.), 'Plea Rolls *temp.*Henry III: Suits Affecting Staffordshire Tenants and Abstracted into English', *The William Salt Archaeological Society: Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, 4.1 (1883), pp. 1-126
TR	Tenure Roll relating to Offlow hundred published in S. Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire Volume I* (Stafford: EP Publishing, 1976 [originally published 1798-1801])
White	W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (Sheffield: Robert Leader, 1834)

* Places marked with an asterisk occur directly underneath a hundred rubric in the Staffordshire Domesday folios. All other places are merely listed under a rubric in the Domesday text.

Table 10: A comparison between hundredal affiliations recorded in Domesday Book and later sources

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Abbey Hulton and Rushton Grange	P [11,21]					P, 1284-85 [3]		P [546 & 579]
Acton Trussell	C [2,3]					P, 1284-85 [6]	C [281]	C [475]
Adbaston	O [2,20]						P [279]	P [606]
Agardsley	O [10,4]							O [346]
Aldridge	O [12,24]						O [279]	O [296]
Almington	P [8,22]						P [279]	P [629]
Alrewas	O [1,11]*		O [116]	O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [8] O, 1316 [14] O, 1401-02 [18]		O [300, 302]
Alstone	T [11,6]						C [281]	C [478]
Alstonefield	P [8,28]					T, 1316 [14]	T [281]	T [715]
Alton	P [1,54]				T [117]	T, 1316 [13] T, 1401-02 [18]	T [281]	T [723
Amblecote	S [12,14]					S, 1284-85 [9]	S [283]	S [245]
Apeton	T [11,6]						C [282]	C [478, 496]
Aspley	P [2,13]							P [634]
Ashley	P [8,25]					P, 1316 [11]	P [279]	P [608, 630]
Aston and Doxey	O [2,21]					P, 1284-85 [6]		P [667]
Aston and Stoke-by-Stone	C [1,47] P [11,9] P [11,23]					P, 1316 [12]		P [680]
Audley	P [17,13]					P, 1316 [11]	P [279]	P [610]
Baden Hall	P [2,11]						P [278]	P [635]
Balterley	P [17,11] P [17,12]					P, 1316 [11]	P [279]	P [614]
Barlaston	P [11,24]					P, 1284-85 [3]	P [279]	P [614]

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
						P, 1316 [12]		
Great? Barr	O [12,25] O [12,28]			O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [9] O, 1316 [14]	O [279]	O [297]
Perry Barr	O [12,27]						O [279]	O [351]
Barton (near Bradley)	T [11,6]						C [282]	C [478]
Barton-under-Needwood[1]	O [1,20]			O [xvi]		O, 1316 [15]	O [280]	O [396]
Baswich	C [2,2]		C [114]					C [474]
Beighterton	C [14,1]*							-[2]
Betley	P [17,10]					P, 1316 [11]	P [279]	P [616]
Bickford	S [17,3]						C [282]	C [504]
Biddulph	C [1,33]*					P, 1284-85 [5]	P [278]	P [617]
Billington	T [11,6]					C, 1284-85 [2]	C [282]	C [478]
Bilston	S [1,4]						S [283]	S [220]
Bishop's Offley	P [2,11]					P, 1284-85 [5]	P [278]	P [607]
Bishton	S [17,6]						P [277]	P [624]
Blithfield	P [8,27]					P, 1284-85 [5]	P [277]	P [619]
Blore	T [11,40]							T [727]
Blymhill	C [11,56]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [2] C, 1316 [16]	C [282]	C [476]
Bobbington	S [11,43]*					S, 1316 [15]	S [283]	S [248]
Bradeley	P [11,28]							-[3]
Bradley (near Bilston)	O [12,23]							O [226]
Bradley (near	T [11,6]*					C, 1284-85 [2]	C [282]	C [478]

[1] Excluded from Table 5. For further discussion: Chapter 2.4, p. 55.

[2] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Beighterton House Farm, however, is immediately north of Weston-upon-Lizard [at National Grid Reference SJ 807114] and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Cuttlestone hundred.

[3] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Bradeley is a district within modern Stoke-on-Trent, and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Pirehill hundred.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Gnosall)						C, 1316 [17]		
Bradley-in-the-Moors	T [15,1]							T [727]
Bramshall	T [11,38]						T [280]	T [728]
Brewood	C [2,1]*		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [2] C, 1316 [17]	C [282]	C [479]
Bridgeford	O [2,21]						P [279]	P [667]
Brineton	C [11,55]						C [282]	C [477]
Brocton and Bednall	P [2,4]*[4]					P, 1284-85 [6]	C [281]	C [475]
Brockton Grange	C [14,1]*							-[5]
King's Bromley	O [1,12]					O, 1316 [12] O, 1401-02 [18]		O [306]
Broughton	P [2,12]						P [278]	P [635]
Bucknall	C [1,34]					P, 1284-85 [5] P, 1316 [12] P, 1401-02 [18]	P [278]	P [545, 579]
Burslem	P [11,22]							P [546, 579]
Bushbury	O [7,3] S [12,19]				S [112]	S, 1284-85 [9] S, 1316 [16]	S [282]	S [279]
Cannock	O [1,25] S [17,5]		C [114]	O [xviii]		C, 1316 [17]	C [281]	C [484]
Cauldon	T [11,4]					T, 1316 [14]	T [281]	T [729]
Caverswall	T [11,36]					T, 1316 [14]	T [281]	T [730]
Charnes	P [2,11]					P, 1284-85 [5] O, 1284-85 [7]	P [278]	P [635]
Chartley	O [1,14]					P, 1284-85 [6]	P [277]	P [684]

[4] Although see discussion of the position of the rubric in Chapter 2.3.2, pp. 48-51.

[5] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Brockton Grange is the name of a farm located approximately one mile north-west of modern Blymhill [at SJ 801136], and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Cuttlestone hundred.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
						P, 1316 [12]		
Chasepool	S [12,3]							-[6]
Chatcull	O [2,11]						P [278]	P [634]
Chebsey	O [10,9]					P, 1284-85 [4] P, 1316 [13]	P [279]	P [620]
Cheddleton	P [8,30]					T, 1316 [13]	T [281]	T [739]
Chillington	C [*DB: Warwicks.*, 28,19][7]*					C, 1284-85 [2]	C [282]	C [481]
Chorlton	O [2,11] O [2,11]					P, 1284-85 [5]	P [278]	P [635]
Church Eaton	C [11,65]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [2] C, 1316 [13]	C [282]	C [490]
Clayton	P [13,6]							P [545, 579]
Clifton Campville[8]	O [1,29]			O [xvi]		O, 1284-85 [8] O, 1316 [15]	O [279]	O [329]
Codsall	S [17,11]*						S [283]	S [254]
Cold Meece	P [2,11]						P [279]	P [634]
Colton	P [8,15] P [11,29]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1284-85 [4] P, 1316 [12]	P [277]	P [621]
Cooksland	P [11,26]							-[9]
Coppenhall	C [11,63]		C [114]			C, 1316 [16]	C [282]	C [504]
Cotes	P [2,11]							P [634]

[6] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Chasepool Farm is located immediately west of modern Kingswinford [at SO 855898], and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Seisdon hundred.

[7] The Domesday entry for Chillington appears in the Warwickshire Domesday folios, albeit directly underneath a rubric for Cuttlestone hundred (i.e. Staffordshire): DB, f. 243; J. Plaister (ed.), *Domesday Book: Warwickshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976), 28,19.

[8] Excluded from Table 5. For further discussion: Chapter 2.4, p. 55.

[9] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Cooksland is located north-west of modern Stafford [at SJ 881 258], and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Pirehill hundred.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Coton	P [8,14]					P, 1284-85 [4]	P [278]	P [140]
Coven	C [11,62]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [1] C, 1316 [16]	C [281]	C [481]
Cowley	S [1,70]						C [282]	C [496]
Crakemarsh	O [1,18]				T [117]			T [764]
Creswell	P [8,19]					P, 1284-85 [4]	P [278]	P [629]
Croxton	P [2,14]						P [279]	P [635]
Derrington	P [8,20]						P [279]	P [667]
Dilhorne	T [11,41]							T [742]
Draycott	O [10,5]							O [345]
Drayton Bassett[10]	O [1,30]			O [xvi]		O, 1284-85 [8] O, 1316 [14]	O [279]	O [334]
Dunston	S [1,7]					C, 1316 [17]	C [281]	C [505]
Eccleshall	P [2,10]*					P, 1284-85 [5] P, 1316 [13]	P [278]	P [630]
Elford[11]	O [1,26]			O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [7] O, 1316 [14]	O [279]	O [339]
Ellaston	T [2,15]* T [11,39]					T, 1316 [13]	T [281]	T [744]
Ellenhall	O [2,20]					P, 1284-85 [5]	P [278]	P [639]
Endon	P [1,61]				T [117]	T, 1316 [13]	T [281]	T [712]
Enson	C [1,43]						P [278]	P [142]
Enville	S [12,10]						S [283]	S [255]
Essington	C [12,22]*					C, 1284-85 [1] C, 1316 [16]	C [281]	S [251]
Fauld	O [10,6] O [10,7]						O [280]	O [345]
Featherstone	C [7,16]*						S [283]	S [234]
Fenton	C [17,21]						P [278]	P [544, 545,

[10] Excluded from Table 5. For further discussion: Chapter 2.4, p. 55.
[11] Excluded from Table 5. For further discussion: Chapter 2.4, p. 55.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
								577]
Flashbrook	P [2,11]					P, 1284-85 [5]	P [278]	P [607]
Forsbrook	P [1,60]						T [281]	T [742]
Fradswell	P [2,8]					O, 1284-85 [7]	P [277]	P [624]
Freeford	O [2,22]			O [xvi]			O [280]	O [106]
Fulford	C [1,40]	P, 1251-52 [1285]				P, 1284-85 [5] P, 1316 [12]	P [278]	P [675]
Gailey	C [11,59]							C [505]
Gayton	P [8,13]					P, 1284-85 [4] P, 1316 [12]	P [279]	P [640]
Gnosall	C [7,18]		C [114]				C [282]	C [494]
Gratwich	T [11,35]*						T [280]	T [746]
Grindon	T [11,3]					T, 1316 [14]	T [281]	T [746]
Hammerwich	O [2,16]*			O [xvi]			O [280]	O [106]
Hanchurch	P [13,5]						P [278]	P [692]
Handsworth	O [12,29]		O [116] O [116]	O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [9] O, 1316 [14]	O [279]	
Hanford	P [13,4]							-[12]
Hansacre	O [2,22]			O [xvi]		O, 1284-85 [7]	O [280]	O [305]
Harborne	O [2,22]					O, 1284-85 [7]	O [279]	O [355]
Harlaston	O [1,32]			O [xvi]		O, 1284-85 [8] O, 1316 [15]	O [280]	O [329]
Hatherton	C [7,13]*						S [283]	S [235]
Haughton	C [11,52]						C [282]	C [498]
(Great) Haywood	P [2,5]					P, 1284-85 [6] P, 1316 [13]	P [277]	P [625]
Hilderstone	C [1,44] P [11,27]					P, 1284-85 [4]	P [278]	P [675]
Himley	S [12,12]				S [110]	S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [258]

[12] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Hanford is a district within modern Stoke-on-Trent, and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Pirehill hundred.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
	S [12,13]							
Hints	O [2,22]			O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [7] O, 1216 [14]	O [279]	O [359]
Hixon	P [2,6]							P [625, 685]
Hopton	P [11,11]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1316 [12]	P [278]	P [140]
Huntington	C [13,10]						C [281]	C [488]
Ingestre	P [11,32]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1316 [12]	P [277]	P [642]
Kingsley	T [15,2] - [none] [16,2]						T [281]	T [751]
Kingswinford	S [1,1]*	S, 1198-99 [1331]			S [116]	S, 1284-85 [9] S, 1316 [15]		S [263]
Kinvaston	C [7,15]						S [283]	S [236]
Kinver	O [1,27]				S [116]	S, 1316 [15]		S [259]
Knightley	C [8,6]					C, 1316 [17]	C [282]	C [496]
Knighton	P [17,7]*							P [607, 650]
Knutton	P [13,8]						P [278]	P [552, 592]
Lapley	C [*DB: Northants.*, 16,1][13]*		C [114]			C, 1316 [16]	C [282]	C [498]
Leek	O [1,21]				T [117]	T, 1316 [13]	T [281]	T [697]
Levedale	C [11,66]					C, 1284-85 [1] C, 1316 [16]	C [282]	C [505]
Leigh	- [none] [4,3]					T, 1316 [13]	T [280]	T [753]
Lichfield*	O [2,16] O [2,22]					O, 1316 [15]		O [61]
Loxley	P [8,18]				T [117]			T [764]
Loynton	C [11,53]						P [279]	C [501][14]

[13] The Domesday entry for Lapley appears in the Northamptonshire Domesday folios, albeit directly underneath a rubric for Cuttlestone hundred (i.e. Staffordshire): DB, f. 222; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Northamptonshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1979), 16,1.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Madeley	P [11,27]					P, 1284-85 [3]	P [279]	P [644]
Madeley Holme	T [11,37]					T, 1316 [13]	T [280]	T [736]
Maer	P [11,17]							P [647]
Marchington	O [10,4]					O, 1316 [15]	O [280]	O [345]
Marston	C [8,9]					P, 1284-85 [4] P, 1316 [12]	P [278]	P [142]
Marston	C [*DB: Northants.*, 16,2][15]		C [114]			C, 1316 [17]	C [282]	C [492]
Mayfield	O [1,23]				T [118]			T [756]
Meaford	P [5,1]* P [8,24]					P, 1316 [12]		P [676]
Milwch	C [1,41] P [11,30]					P, 1316 [12]	P [278]	P [648]
Mitton	T [11,6]					C, 1316 [16]	C [282]	C [505]
Morfe	S [12,2]					S, 1284-85 [9] S, 1316 [15]	S [283]	
Moreton (near Colwich)[16]	O [2,18] - [none] [16,3]?					P, 1284-85 [6]	P [277]	P [620]
Moreton (near Gnosall)[17]	C [8,7]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [2] C, 1316 [16]	C [282]	C [496]
Moreton (near Hanbury?)[18]	O [10,8]?							O [345]
Moseley	S [12,21]							S [250]
Mucklestone	P [17,8]					P, 1284-85, [5]	P [279]	P [649]
Newton	P [14,2]*					P, 1284-85 [4]	P [277]	P [619]

[14] For further discussion of Loynton's hundredal affiliation: Chapter 2.4, pp. 57-58.
[15] The Domesday entry for Marston appears in the Northamptonshire Domesday folios, albeit directly underneath a rubric for Cuttlestone hundred (i.e. Staffordshire): DB, f. 222; F.R. Thorn & C. Thorn (eds), *Domesday Book: Northamptonshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1979), 16,2
[16] See Appendix 1.
[17] See Appendix 1.
[18] Not included in Table 5 because the Domesday entry cannot be reliably identified as the Moreton near to Hanbury: Appendix 1.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Norbury	C [8,10]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [1] C, 1316 [16] C, 1401-02 [18]	C [282]	C [500]
Normacot	P [13,3]							P [675]
Norton Canes and Wyrley	O [2,16]*			O [xvi]			O [280]	O [369]
Norton-in-the-Moors	P [11,19]					P, 1284-85 [3]	P [278]	P [663]
Oaken	S [11,45]				S [115]	S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [254]
Oakley	S [11,47]					O, 1284-85 [7]	O [280]	O [338]
High Offley	P [11,14]							P [640]
Okeover	O [4,8]						T [281]	T [758]
High Onn	C [8,8]		C [114]				C [282]	C [491]
Orton	S [12,7]				S [111]	S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [292]
Otherton	C [11,60]					C, 1284-85 [1]	C [281]	C [505]
Oxley	S [12,9]						S [283]	S [251]
Packington	O [2,16]* O [2,22]					O, 1284-85 [8]	O [279]	O [459]
Patshull	S [11,44]				S [112]	S, 1284-85 [10] S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [272]
Pattingham	O [1,28]				S [114]	S, 1284-85 [10] S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [272]
Pelsall	- [none] [7,9]						S [283]	S [236]
Pendeford	S [12,20]				S [112]	S, 1284-85 [10] S, 1316 [16]	S [282]	S [288]
Penkridge	S [1,7] C [7,17]	C, 1198-99 [1331]				C, 1284-85 [2] C, 1316 [16] C, 1401-02 [18]	C [281]	C [501]
Lower Penne	S [12,5]				S [112]	S, 1284-85 [10] S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [273]
Upper Penne	S [12,6]				S [113]	S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [273]
Pillaton	- [none] [4,5]						C [281]	C [505]

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Podmore	O [2,20]					P, 1284-85 [5]	P [278]	P [635]
Ranton	P [11,25]					P, 1284-85 [4] P, 1316 [11]	P [279]	P [664]
Rickerscote	C [11,67]							C [144]
Hamstall Ridware	O [5,2]* P [8,26] S [11,50]			O [xvii]		O, 1316 [14]	O [280]	O [341]
Mavesyn Ridware	P [8,17]			O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [7] O, 1316 [14]	O [280]	O [365]
Pipe Ridware	O [2,22]						O [280]	O [371]
Rocester	O [1,17]				T [117]	T, 1316 [13]	T [281]	T [759]
Rodbaston	C [13,9]*		C [115]				C [281]	C [505]
Rolleston	O [10,3]*			O [xvi]		O, 1316 [15]	O [280]	O [371]
Rowley (near Lichfield)*	O [2,16]							-[19]
Rudyard	P [1,63]						T [281]	T [713
Rugeley	O [1,22]			O [xviii]		C, 1316 [17]	C [281]	C [508]
Rushall	O [12,26]			O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [7] O, 1316 [14]	O [279]	O [374]
Salt	P [11,12]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1316 [12]	P [278]	P [142]
Sandon	O [1,13] P [11,10]					P, 1284-85 [6] P, 1316 [13]	P [278]	P [665]
Great Saredon	C [11,61]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [3] C, 1316 [16]	C [281]	C [516]
Little Saredon	S [17,2]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [1] C, 1316 [16]		C [516]
Sedgley	S [12,1]* S [12,4]				S [116]	S, 1284-85 [9] S, 1316 [15]		S [278]

[19] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Rowley Farms is located approximately two miles north-east of modern Yoxall [at SK 117116], and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Offlow hundred.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Seighford	O [2,21]						P [278]	P [667]
Seisdon	S [12,17]					S, 1284-85 [10]	S [283]	S [163, 291]
Shareshill	C [11,64]					C, 1284-85 [1] C, 1316 [16]	C [281]	C [515]
Sheen	P [1,51]						T [281]	T [760]
Shenstone	O [8,32]*			O [xvii]		O, 1316 [14]	O [279]	O [375]
Sheriff Hales	C [8,5]*		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [2] C, 1316 [17]		C [516]
Shushions	C [17,20]*							-[20]
Slindon	O [2,11]						P [278]	P [643]
Smethwick	O [2,22]							O [356]
Standon and the Rudge	P [11,15]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1316 [11]	P [278]	P [669]
Stanshope	P [1,52]						T [281]	T [717]
Stretton (near Burton)	- [none] [4,4]			O [xvi]			O [280]	O [320]
Stretton (near Penkridge)	C [11,57]							C [505]
Stychbrook	O [2,16]							-[21]
Sugnall	O [2,20]						P [278]	P [635]
Swynnerton	P [11,18]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1316 [11]	P [278]	P [686]
Talke	P [17,14]							P [612]
Tamhorn	O [2,22]					O, 1284-85 [7]	O [279]	O [379]
Tean	T [11,2]*					T, 1316 [13]	T [280]	T [737]

[20] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Shushions Manor is located approximately two miles north-west of modern Lapley [at SJ 842143], and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Cuttlestone hundred.

[21] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Stytchbrook is a mile and a half north of Lichfield and therefore part of the area that came to be known as Offlow hundred. The Site and Monuments Record places a deserted post-Conquest settlement at SK 117116, and the modern civil parish of Curborough and Elmhurst, immediately north of Lichfield, contained an area known as Stychbrook Green in the fifteenth century: D. Horovitz, *The Place-Names of Staffordshire* (Brewood: David Horovitz, 2005), p. 521; N.J. Tringham in M.W. Greenslade (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Stafford Volume XIV: Lichfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 239-31.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Tettenhall	S [1,2] - [none]				S [113]	S, 1401-02 [18]	S [283]	S [286]
Thorpe Constantine	- [none]			O [xvi]		O, 1284-85 [9]	O [280]	O [401]
Thursfield	P [13,1]*							P [552, 592]
Tillington	P [11,1]*					P, 1284-85 [3]	P [278]	P [143]
Tipton	O [2,22]					O, 1284-85 [7]	O [279]	O [401, 402]
Tittensor	P [11,33]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1316 [11]	P [278]	P [674]
Tixall	P [8,23] P [11,31]					P, 1284-85 [3] P, 1316 [12]	P [277]	P [687]
Trentham	P [1,8]*	P, 1251-52 [1285]				P, 1316 [12]	P [278]	P [689]
Trysull	S [12,15]				S [112]	S, 1284-85 [10] S, 1316 [12]	S [283]	S [290]
Tunstall	O [2,20]						P [279]	P [550]
Tutbury	P [10,1]		O [116]	O [xvi]		O, 1316 [15]	O [280]	O [406]
Tymmore	O [2,22]					O, 1284-85, 7]		
Uttoxeter	O [1,19]				T [117]	T, 1316 [14]	T [281]	T [761]
Walton (near Eccleshall)	O [2,20]						P [278]	P [634]
Walton (near Stone)	P [11,18]*					P, 1316 [12]	P [278]	P [674]
Walton Grange	C [8,11]							-[22]
Walton-on-the-Hill	C [2,2]						C [281]	C [474]
Warslow	P [8,29]	T, 1198-99 [1331]					T [281]	T [719]
Water Eaton	C [11,58]						C [282]	C [506]

[22] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Walton Grange is located just over two miles south-west of modern Gnosall [at SJ 808176], and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Cuttlestone hundred.

Modern name	DB [DB: Staffs reference]	BoF, date [page no.]	HR (1255) [page no.]	TR (*c.* 1255) [page no.]	PR (Henry III) [page no.]	FA, date [page no.]	LS (1334) [page no.]	White (1834) [page no.]
Wednsbury	S [1,6]	O, 1255 [1291]		O [xvii]		O, 1284-85 [8] O, 1316 [14]		O [449]
Wednesfield	- [none] [7,7]						S [283]	S [237]
Weeford	O [2,22]			O [xvi]		O, 1284-85 [7]	O [280]	O [458]
Weston-under-Lizard	C [14,1]*		C [114]					C [518]
Weston-upon-Trent	P [17,15]						P [277]	P [693]
Whitmore	P [13,2]						P [278]	P [694]
Wigginton	P [1,9]		O [116]			O, 1284-85 [8] O, 1316 [14]		O [388]
Wightwick	S [1,3]							-[23]
Wilbrighton	C [11,54]		C [114]			C, 1284-85 [2]	C [282]	C [496]
Willenhall	P [1,10] - [none] [7,8]						S [283]	S [239]
Winnington	P [17,9]							P [650]
Wolseley	P [2,7]							P [627]
Wombourne	S [12,8]					S, 1316 [16]	S [283]	S [292]
Wrottesley	S [11,46]					S, 1284-85 [10]	S [283]	S [283]
Yarlet	P [8,12]*							P [695]
Yoxall	O [2,22]			O [xvi]		O, 1316 [15]	O [280]	O [470]

[23] Not listed in any of the post-Domesday sources surveyed. Wightwick Manor is on the western edge of the modern conurbation of Wolverhampton, and is therefore part of the area that came to be known as Seisdon hundred.

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LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Abbot's Bromley (1847)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Adbaston (1840)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Aston (1845)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Audley (1838)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Bagot's Bromley (1848)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Balterley (1841)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Betley (1842)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Biddulph (1840)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Blore with Swinscoe (1845)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Brewood (1838)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Calwick (1844)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Clifton and Haunton (1839)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Codsall (1850)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Colton (1839)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Colwich (1839)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Darlaston (1850)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Drayton Bassett (1838)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Drayton-in-Hales (*c.* 1842)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Flashbrook (1842)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Forton (1838)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Fazeley (1850)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Ilam (*c.*1844)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Kingswinford (1839)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Kingswood (1841)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Madeley (1840)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Mucklestone (1838)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Oaken (1841)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Rocester (1850)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Rolleston (1838)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Sandon (1844)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Sheen (*c.* 1847)
LRO	B/A/15	Tithe Map for Shenstone (1838)
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